

CAROLINA QUARTERLY

Volume 8

1955-1956

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COVER DESIGN BY MURRAY WHISNANT

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THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY is published three times annually at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Subscription Rates are \$1.25 per year. Foreign Subscriptions are \$1.75 per year. The CAROLINA QUARTERLY is distributed by Selected Outlets, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, N. J.

The CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and belles-lettres. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to The CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

the CAROLINA QUARTERLY

Fall Issue

Vol. VIII, No. I

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The August Tree

By DORIS BETTS

There were a number of things in the world which irritated Mr. Crockett, but worst of all was the suspicion that he was being constantly and objectively categorized.

By this, Mr. Crockett meant that somewhere whole hosts of people were thinking of him as though he were synonymous with only a part of himself—as though he were merely a small businessman, or a Rural Box Holder, or a Baptist, or an alumnus of Crabtree High School. Whereas, in truth (he would think indignantly) he was not one but all of these; and it made him angry to suppose, for instance, that the mechanic at Fitchley Motors thought of him only as *The-Man-with-the-Fifty-Chevrolet-that-Rattled*.

Because Mr. Crockett had grown so acutely and angrily conscious of this danger of being thought about too simply, he had taken to explaining himself to absolute strangers; and for this reason they often looked on him with dark suspicion. It was as though he felt bound to give, at least, some clues to the man within.

As, for instance, when a worker approached him for the Cerebral Palsy Fund, Mr. Crockett could see himself clearly reflected in the waiting eyes, twin pictures of a balding man already labeled: Possible Donor. And Mr. Crockett, seeing himself so simplified, would remark in a cross voice, "I have a farm out from town. Cross-breeding Brahma and Angus. Very interesting." And then he would rare back in his chair, frowning. There! his look implied. *That* should have settled the dust.

Or a great longing would come upon him to walk up to absolute strangers in the street and say to them loudly and rudely, "I am what I am!" and see what they would say.

Or once when Reverend and Mrs. Grimley called on him and everyone in the room was suddenly busily occupied being Minister, Minister's Wife, Church Member, it was Mr. Crockett who burst out irrelevantly, his eyes popping from agitation, "Once I stole four dollars!"

It was a lie, but it bathed his soul with reassurance. It reminded him that he was himself and that he was inviolate.

And Mr. Crockett considered himself an educated man though there had been only two years of technical agriculture at his uncle's expense; he was educated because he read books and asked questions

and had some conception both of his capacity and of his ignorance. He had been to Shakespeare and to Plato and Saint Luke, and he thought it ought to show in him a bit, like a highly tailored suit. If only he had taken up some other enterprise instead of the one his uncle left him.

For Mr. Crockett was in the septic tank business. He cleaned them and installed them, in strict conformity to Board of Health regulations; and he had a well drilling rig on the side. It was a good business, he often said defiantly to his wife. It had paid well. Sometimes Mr. Crockett was even able to tell himself that through his efforts rural life in Prince Tyler County was becoming more sanitary. It was becoming downright hygienic.

But at other times Mr. Crockett's position in the Scheme of Things frightened him by its smallness. He would wake at night, surprised to remember his unimportance.

At that time he would picture himself, coming round and bald into the final Glory, an insignificant pin-point of a soul; and hearing that majestic roll of the voice of God saying to him, "And what did you do all your life, Brother Crockett?"

"I cleaned out . . ." he would begin, stammering. "Sir, I cleaned up . . ." But here he would stop, appalled at what he had been about to say. He could not say *that* word. Not to God.

In his younger days, it had seemed important to Mr. Crockett to acquire the very tags he now found so disagreeable—to be a Businessman, a Baptist, a Husband and Father; to have the things his parents had not had—the soft mattresses and the white bread and the indoor plumbing.

Old Mr. Crockett had sharecropped, and he himself had picked the cotton that was not half theirs and slopped hogs and hoed weeds; his uncle had built the septic tank business and produced no heirs; another uncle had worked in a sawmill all his life, all his life turning trees to dust.

His mother (she had outlived them all) was thin as a pencil with eyes that looked as though they had grown that way from seeing through stone walls. It seemed to Mr. Crockett that both his parents had warred all their lives with the soil and the sky and captured nothing; they had only worked and eaten and slept and now and then the land—as though it relented—gave up to them a few spindly things, enough for molasses and flour and a tinselled motto for one wall, a motto that he could see even now as though it were still hanging in his head, "The Lord is my Light and my Salvation. Whom shall I fear?"

Who indeed? Only the very air about them; only the unfriendly earth and the hostile seasons.

So when Wade Crockett thought of the unpainted boards in that long ago house and the splinters and the cold and the homemade whitewash on the hearths, he would feel he had come far and done much after all.

If only it had been by some different road, banking or law practice or setting bones; and if only he could be sure that he was—after all—different from his parents, that he had won more at less cost. For he was not really sure of this. Sometimes it seemed to him he moved around the same tired circle, and it was only wider somewhat.

And whenever Mr. Crockett thought about all these things in the night with his tubby little wife sleeping soundly beside him and a branch coming and going against the house, he would clasp and unclasp his hands and turn on the mattress as though it were a heap of stones.

"Frances?" he would whisper finally, desperately. "Frances, are you asleep?"

Frances Crockett would slow her snoring, catch her breath in surprise, and then be gone again into those dreamless regions he could not quite reach. He had almost pulled her out; he had almost made her lie beside him and be aware of dark and space going out forever on all sides.

But then she escaped again; she began breathing in and out and out and in; and all the time the branch was going up and down with a terrible regularity against the wall.

Mr. Crockett would turn onto his back and stare up at the ceiling a million miles away. He would think to himself, I am all alone.

It was an August morning and the sky as blue as cornflowers but Mr. Crockett was in a bad humor for all of that. He thrust his tongue under his upper lip and brought the razor down as gently as he dared and then stretched his jaw out of shape and got the whiskers there.

He thought, for perhaps the hundredth time, How ridiculous this is! Every day as long as I live, scraping the hairs away.

"Hurry," Frances called. "They'll get all soggy." She had poured him a bowl of con flakes for breakfast and was as anxious as though she were serving crepes suzettes to visiting diplomats.

He said, giving himself a hard look in the mirror, "I'm rushing as fast as I can." He put the razor down and frowned crossly at himself and pulled his own nose.

"You've been there half an hour," Frances called.

He did not answer her. He leaned his chin into the glass and blew, so that the steam hid his face completely. Then, like a child, he made two holes in the fog and let his eyes show through.

"I'm coming," he said again, not very loud. He watched the man hiding behind the steamed-up face and thought to himself that at just this hour all over the world thousands of men and women were scraping off old faces and painting on new ones and getting ready to walk out into the daylight as though they were real, as though they were themselves. He could picture them all before thousands of identical mirrors in thousands of bathrooms, stretching the smile across the teeth, reddening the mouth, plucking the hairs from the nostrils, smiling and frowning a time or two to see if the whole thing fit.

He sat on the toilet seat, miserable.

"Are you coming?" It was Frances and from the sound of her she was starting up the stairs, puffing. He turned on the water, loud.

"Sometimes," Frances was saying, a little out of breath, "Sometimes I can't imagine what you do in there all the time."

No, nor I either, he thought, holding the shaving brush idly under the faucet. A few of the hairs washed loose and went down the drain. A thousand more of those, he thought, and I'll have to buy a new one. He was as tired as if he had worked all day.

"I'm coming, Frances."

He opened the bathroom door right in her face and the two of them looked at each other, surprised. Then he smiled. He loved her, really; after all these years he loved her; the thought continued to amaze him. It was as though he owned something infinitely precious and now and then would take it out and cup it in his hand and say to himself, surprised, "Why it is mine, after all."

He put his hand out now and slid it around the neck and underneath her hair. "I'm coming," he said.

She smiled at him.

When Mr. Crockett came downstairs he saw that Teena was still at the breakfast table and he set his face and shoulders cautiously, like a soldier going into heavy fire. Teena was his only daughter; she was sixteen and she was a little hard to take sometimes. Teena made him feel like the never-mentioned member of the family who one day escapes from the backroom and appears in the parlor before company, drooling spittle and making meaningless noises.

Mr. Crockett nodded to Teena now, trying to look as inoffensive as possible and as though he would not disgrace her.

Frances frowned over his shoulder as he sat down and finally took up the spoon and prodded his cereal critically.

"It's like wet rags," she sighed.

"Fine, fine," said Mr. Crockett absently, eyeing his daughter. Teena was altogether hidden behind a book ("The Rubaiyat," he read with his lips, mispronouncing); and sometimes hands appeared on each side of the cover and, as if by radar, located toast and butter and pulled them out of sight.

Mr. Crockett said cautiously, "Good morning, Teena."

There was a mumble and a crunch of teeth that he accepted for reply.

He sloshed the cornflakes around and finally ate a mouthful or so. They had all the flavor of wood shavings; he tossed on a few more spoons of sugar hopefully.

Suddenly Teena lowered her book and he saw that her eyelids were droopy, which was a bad sign. Teena wrote poetry, huge scrap-books full about Nature and God and Unrequited Love, most of it over crackers at 2 a.m. in pitch blackness, and it made her weak-eyed in the mornings. It seemed to Mr. Crockett an inconvenient method, but Teena said it was soulful.

"Night is very soulful," she said. "Naked."

Now, dropping her book abruptly and drooping her eyelids from the night's long and soulful composition, Teena said, "I don't suppose you saw the moon last night."

"No," Mr. Crockett admitted, feeling gross and insensitive. He gulped cereal, hastily, and then—trying once to reach her—said, "I heard the tree. The one that rubs on the house whenever the wind blows."

Teena looked contemptuous. It was evidently *not* the same thing.

Frances said, sensing a storm, "Have some more cornflakes, Wade," and he had some, feeling resigned. All my life, every crisis, he thought bitterly, eating more cornflakes.

In spite of himself, he smiled.

Later, as he was driving to work, Mr. Crockett thought about his daughter with envy. It was all worked out for Teena right now; she knew her function in the Universe. Teena was the Socratic gadfly. It was for Teena to prod the sensibility of man, to cry "How sad!" or "How beautiful!" or "How noble!" for him in all the right moments and for all the best causes. Her poems had all the superiority of youth, that smug conviction that until this precise moment in time no man anywhere had reached such depth of feeling or known such tragedy, or expressed either quite so well.

Mr. Crockett, sighing, left the highway for Lawson Street, waved at Mr. Elmo and Bobby, thought that he almost wanted to be as young as Teena himself, to be that raw and receptive to experience, to touch everything as though it were newly made for his hand.

But that was too long ago to reach. While he waited for the traffic light he saw a cat go up a tree and come down again, looking dissatisfied.

He drove finally under the wooden sign that said Wade M. Crockett, Septic Tanks and Well Drilling, and parked the car (which *was* a Fifty Chevrolet, and which *did* rattle). Someday (he thought, just sitting there with the motor running), someday when she was older, he might really be able to talk to Teena. Someday perhaps he would even tell her about that tree that scraped at his house in the night like something longing to come in, and about that sense of utter isolation that flooded his bedroom with the dark. It wasn't that night was soulful (he thought now with sudden clarity) but that it was limitless; it took the edges and corners off things so that the yard and the street outside were the same, and the walls of houses shut nothing in and nothing out, and on all sides the black went out for a million miles.

Mr. Crockett turned off the motor suddenly, trying to laugh at himself, a foolish fat man sitting absently in a running car, making abstract arguments with his daughter.

Ivey looked up from her typewriter when he banged the screen door and walked into the unfinished outer office where the calendars hung on one bare wall and the four straight chairs lined up against the other.

"G'morning, Mr. Crockett."

"Morning, Ivey. Going to be hot."

She nodded and three tight curls on her head leaped up like watch springs and settled back again. Mr. Crockett watched, fascinated. Sometimes when this happened he expected it to twang.

"Mail come?"

The nodding and leaping took place again. "August bills. Eight checks. Circulars. It's on your desk."

"All right."

"My sister's going to have another baby." This was announced with the same tone as the morning mail.

"Which one?" he said, being polite.

"Ruby. The youngest. This'll be her second baby."

"That's wonderful." He said it automatically the way one says "That's terrible," about illness and "That's tragic," about the death of a child.

"Kids are a lot of trouble."

"That's right, they are."

Her look accused him. "But worth every minute of it!"

He began to edge toward his own office. "Oh yes. No question about that."

"Bet you wouldn't take anything for Teena."

"Not anything." He was into the other room now and at the roll top desk, relieved.

Getting past Ivey in the mornings was like running a daily gauntlet. So far as Ivey was concerned, the world was sharply divided into two classes, the Unhappy and the Married. Ivey wanted dreadfully to be Married. Mr. Crockett sometimes felt that what Ivey actually wanted was a bit more elemental than this, but he looked away from her carefully when he thought it. He felt disrespectful, as though he had been caught peeking down her blouse (which, goodness knows, would have been a great waste of time). He began to look through the bills now, frowning.

"The work crew get out?" he called.

"Eight o'clock," said Ivey. "Huey's sick."

"What's the matter with Huey?"

"He says it's a hernia."

Mr. Crockett snorted. "Huey doesn't know."

"I guess not. That's what he said, though."

Ivey had a very sharp voice as though she had overused it and finally worn all the softness off. Even when she stood next to you she seemed always to be calling into other rooms; and she wore also a sharp perfume that went out from her like darts on all sides.

Suddenly, there at his desk, Mr. Crockett had a picture of himself trying to talk to Ivey about whether a man was important in the world or not, and whether it mattered if the dark were friendly or indifferent to him, and how there was a tree at his house that went up and down and would continue to go up and down until it aged and rotted and crumbled away. He could hear Ivey relating the amazing thing to one of her three married sisters, what Mr. Crockett had said.

"And he's got such a nice family, too," Ivey would say, inclining her head so that the curls wobbled, expectantly.

"Gee," they would answer. "That's a shame."

He sat at the desk chuckling until Ivey asked him what was funny.

"Nothing," he said. "Nothing really."

At noon, when the crew came back and banged into the outer office and stood there dirty and sweating as though to accuse him

by their weariness, Mr. Crockett went to his office door and nodded to them.

"Everything o.k.?"

"Hot as blazes," Huey said. "Hottest August on record."

"You feel all right?"

Huey gave him a look of disgust which meant he did not feel all right, as any fool could see.

Pete said he was going to knock off for lunch.

"Can I be off this afternoon?" said Huey. "I got to see a doctor, that's all."

Mr. Crockett said Huey could be off.

"Who's a good doctor?" This was to everyone.

"Critchett," said Pete. "At the Clinic. When I had kidney trouble . . ."

Huey said hastily that he thought Critchett would be fine and began to tell them all how bad he felt before Pete could get started on his kidneys. They all went out the door, Huey's complaints carrying them along.

Mr. Crockett said he thought he might go eat himself, and Ivey made some joke about that sounded like a cannibal; until he had to stand and smile and smile like an idiot, his face cracking, while she laughed about it.

He escaped to the car finally and gripped the steering wheel as though he were thinking of pulling it out. I don't see why we bother, Mr. Crockett thought. Talking to each other. It seemed to him then that the space between people was no less than that between star and star, and that most conversation was no more than the tossing of this or that small thing across the miles.

He drove down Lawson Street and onto the highway and nodded to Mr. Elmo again and almost ran over a cat which might or might not have been the same one he saw that morning.

When he got home he found lunch on the table (Frances was having her hair done) and the morning mail at his plate for him to read. There was a mimeographed letter from the Church Building Committee and a card from the neighbors, who were in California, and a letter from his mother, who still lived in incredible discomfort on a Georgia farm and would not have plumbing.

"Let me alone," his mother always said grimly, as though she were proving vast truths by pretending there was neither electricity nor good heating systems in the world. He took up her letter and read it first.

His mother wrote that he should hold to the Lord and not let Teena take up with bad company and that he must be careful how he spent his money, because the world was full of thieves. He

smiled at her; she was not suspicious really; it was only a way she had of making herself heard.

Mr. Crockett ate some lima beans and stirred his coffee and read the letter again, thinking about her.

He could almost see her writing this particular letter, hunched over the kitchen table with her shoulders as sharp as ploughshares, making the word just so, every loop on every letter neither too large nor too small; and lifting her pen at the end of every word so that there were no unnecessary flourishes.

And he thought of his mother, as he had thought so many times before, *They will never kill her.*

And by "they" he meant everything from cancer to automobiles; he felt she would go on living until she had literally worn out every joint and fiber in her frame and then only the body would go; and somewhere her skinny stubborn spirit would prevail.

That comforted him somehow, the way as a child he had been comforted by knowing God had not been born and would not die.

It seemed to Mr. Crockett, thinking thus, that he was almost upon something then; he had almost laid hand on it. It was an idea, a thought, a Something that scuttled just away from his grasp, like an animal not yet willing to come close.

He shrugged, folded the letter, grinned, drank the coffee. And suddenly he saw his mother as he had once seen her, standing in the hail that was slicing all the plants, standing with her face up into the pellets angrily, and crying aloud, "Stop that! Stop it, I say!"

There! Almost he had caught hold of the thought a second time and he stood up in his kitchen, holding his coffee cup like a doubtful torch, and said to himself, I almost knew something important then.

It gave him a feeling of vicarious importance himself, like a returned soldier who forever tells neighborhood children, "Once when Pershing passed I touched him with my hand."

When Mr. Crockett got back to work he learned that Huey had been put to bed for three days, and he drove out to see him and advanced him part of his wages.

And later he sat down to write his weekly copy for his ad in the Lamberville Gazette and he could think of nothing original to say on a hot August afternoon. He wrote down finally, "We do the best work we can," and set it in. He was oddly pleased about it, as though he had invented some clever slogan.

And now and then that day he remembered his mother, remembered the spindly petunias she had grown in an old tire in the yard, and how she had lavished more care on them than on the cotton;

and remembered the day his father died, how she had gone about the house canning and baking and stewing all the things he would never eat again, and pressing all his clothes, as though each wrinkle were a blot on his memory.

He balanced the books and made the bank deposit and went out to talk with a man who wanted time to pay his bill because crops had been bad. He knew about crops. He knew how it was to wait for a cloud like a man's hand that might mean rain, and wonder if it would come in time.

He was already tired when he drove up to his house that evening, and there were two dogs on his lawn, a bitch and a male, doing just about what one might expect of them. Mr. Crockett saw a lady passing stone-faced in the street and looking carefully away; and he sat at the curb in his own car for a minute and watched them lurching all across his yard.

From the living room window Teena called, "Daddy, can't you do something?" and he said, grinning, "Looks like they're doing all right by themselves," and Teena giggled as though she thought there might be life in the old boy yet.

The dogs went off into a hedge and threshed in the leaves.

Still Mr. Crockett did not get out; he sat there reaching in his mind for that thought again and suddenly he had it; and it was so simple he could have cried. I am not a dog, he said to himself, softly, and that was all it had been all along.

He got out of the car, disappointed, and started up the walk toward the house with the tall door and the big windows with the limbs against them.

Then he thought again, I am not a tree.

It did not comfort him now, but he thought someday it might. He thought this might be the beginning of his knowing why it mattered to dig deep clean wells and pay fair wages and go on loving his wife and touching her hair in the mornings. It was as yet a thought no more than smoke, but he thought someday it would mean something to him and he was not so tired as before.

Teena said from the window again, "Will you help me fix my bookcase?" and Mr. Crockett said he would.

He kicked once at the tree outside his window as he passed, but not unkindly, more as a gesture, more to show that he could.

Conrad Aiken

Vaudeville Suite

I. Williams and Williams.

Well, then if you're so tired of this,
we'll work out something new:
for a new dance, a dance of death,
a dance of death might do:

I know—these things get on your nerves:
sometimes by god I dream
of dance and turn and slide and turn
until I'd like to scream:

nothing, nothing, but violins,
where miles of footlights glare:
and we are yanked like mannequins
to leap in the spotlight there.

Is it a new dress that you want—?
a hat—? O well, I guess
there's cash enough, for both: why not!
Go get yourself a dress! . . .

. . . and a new dance, a dance of death:
with music, let me see:
maybe some kind of funeral march?
and skulls for you and me.

II. Front Row.

Day after day she came, day after day
sat in the front row, fixed sad eyes upon him,
and never spoke to him and never smiled:
just sat and sat, and watched his fingers moving
on the subtly gleaming levers; watched his lips,
and how he moistened them before he blew;
watched the blue eyes gliding across the music,
the soiled and lamplit music; and how, when he was tired,
he sighed, and rested the oboe on his knee.

The people on the stage meant nothing, nothing:
she'd seen them all so many times, remembered
all that they said or did: they came and went
silent as thought, for all she cared:
the blue-haired girl who squeaked a violin,
smiling a fixed and foolish smile: the clowns,
who lifted vulgar faces into the spotlight
and yelled so out of tune: screaming monkeys,
dwarfs and trapeze artists, bottle-jugglers,
or pert young men who played pianos blindfold.

The pictures on the white screen glowed or faded,
the music changed, the spotlight carved new shadows
sharply against the drop; and still unseeing,
never lifting her eyes, never applauding,
or only faintly smiling at some stale joke,
she sat and stared. So near she leaned to him,
that sometimes, lifting her skirt to cross her knees,
her slipper touched his elbow, and he'd turn
to stare at her a moment above his oboe,
still blowing a tune, and edge his chair away.

What was it like? that unknown world of hers?
those empty streets in which no lamps were lighted?
and no doors opened, and no voice was heard?

III. Exit.

Now, as the old man staggered, and cleared his throat,
dizzy with gin, and raised one hand, and started
reciting hoarsely, for the fourth time that day,
'The Face on the Bar-Room Floor,' she stood in the wings
and listened to him, this man she'd always hated,
and wondered how he would die, and then, how soon.
What had he ever touched, finer than brick?
What had he ever loved, finer than flesh?
Yet some day soon, over the windowsill,
in some dull room with a bed and a dusty mirror,
the yellow dawn would creep and find him dead.

Music must die, she thought, but in its dying
leaves wonder on the air: love must perish,
and that is heartbreak. The first-love moonlight
blows across the darkness and drifts away,
petals fall, and the red sun sinks to sea.
But to die thus, at the end of ugliness,

in the stale air of a long unopened room,
hearing only an echo of obscene laughter,
'The Face on the Bar-Room Floor,' or the spurt of a match:
was this the best? Was it for this she danced
down narrowing corridors to an unseen door?
Would music suddenly snarl, and love die swearing?

IV. August Midnight.

I don't care where you bury me—what does it matter?
In the country with trees, in the city with houses.
I don't care whether you mark my grave or not.
I never was vain, I had no excuse to be,
always a sort of failure, always a plodder,
with the same old tricks, year after year.
There's just one favour I'd like to ask you, though:
I could die easier if I knew they'd dress me
in that old suit of purple silk, the one
with the peacock's eyes embroidered on it,
and the dagger across the chest, and the two blue eyes
just over the knees—blue eyes, you know the one.
It's there in the trunk. Will you get it out for me?
I've always liked that suit, I've got my reasons:
I'd hate to think some other tramp might wear it.
I'd hate to think it might get thrown away.

V. Musical Cleggs.

Tapping silvery tunes on a xylophone,
or shaking gongs and bells:
this is a sound I know, but far away
at the end of a lamplit street.
Here are the golden stars above black water,
and soft smoke trembles warmly over the stars;
and under all, or over all,
the melancholy persuasive sound of waves.
And I see you leaning through cold green shine of leaves,
cold laurel flowers, against a wall of lights,
smiling at me and silent.
What music are you listening to, I wonder,
that makes blue eyes so strange?

(Vermillion parrots, an old dead skull of moon,
peacocks on marble tombs, white roses falling,
and the cries of peacocks under a cloud—!)

And there far off at the end of a lamplit street,
the little thin sound I know:

the tapping of silvery tunes on a xylophone,
the shaking of gongs and bells.

VI. Silent Picture.

The picture-screen slid down again; once more
the leader sharply rapped his rack, and whispered

"Regular picture-music—"The Dream of Love." "

He moistened his thumb, and turned the lamplit page,
although he knew the whole thing through by heart;
and, as the thick white rays shot down through darkness,
lifted the polished flute, and softly blew.

Sometimes, the rays hung cold and motionless;
sometimes, they wove and slid through one another
like dazzling fan-blades. And down them always quivered
beautiful girls, their hands stretched out, imploring,
vampires and villains, thieves and murderers,
white horses, galloping over seas of mist,
soundless pursuits, or death in cold green moonlight.
He raised his eyes, and watched, uncomprehending,
the furious dialogues of unheard speech:
saw, while the villain glared beneath the curtain,
the heroine lift a lamp to walk through shadow:
and scarcely needing the leader's signal, played
the rapid staccato of the "hurry" music.

Miraculous, this seemed. He thought, sometimes,
In the brief moments when he had no part,
and dropped the flute, to rest his arms;
that all this huge, hot theatre, full of faces,
pale in the yellow light, was nothing more
than the high sombre cavern of a brain:
"and this bright screen was the bright retina
on which the images, from a world outside,
shivered, and lived: and all these shapes and changes
were thoughts, perhaps, or dreams, or—recollections."

But then the leader rapped on the rack, and whispered,
"Hearts and Flowers." "The violins complained,
he hooked his lip once more above the flute;
while ghostly lovers stepped through ghostly moonlight,
and the cellist next him throbbed the resonant wires.

VII. Vyo-Lyn.

When Vyo-Lyn have come and gone
and Queen Zudora's act is over

and Violet's leopard turn is done
and Felice runs to meet her lover

and cards and wands are laid away
and music ends and people hurry
and the dying man for one more day
postpones the fever and the worry:

and she goes out who in her ears
still listens to applause and laughter:
and he goes out who thinks he hears
malignant hisses creeping after:

then, while the birds in hooded cage
are perched in silent rows and sleeping,
the red-faced stage-hand takes the stage,
and whistles, and stomps across it, sweeping

the dust of golden-slippered feet,
spangles, and ash, and rainbow paper,
where Rose or Lily sang so sweet,
or Frost or Coffin cut a caper:

and having swept turns out the lights,
and knocks his pipe, and leaves the curtain
hung high and dark for other nights
and other vain things just as certain.

Movement and Tableau In the Dance

By DIANE DI PRIMA

Although in recent years dance as an art has received much more attention than ever before, there has been little or no attempt at analytic criticism. Individual choreographers stand or fall in a vacuum. There has been no assessment of the achievement of one dance in terms of another, or if there has been it has hardly gone beyond a comparison of the different work of one individual performer or choreographer.

Reduced to the absurdity of definition, dance is the rhythmic use of the human body resulting in communicable aesthetic pleasure. It is an important factor that the aesthetic emotion involved be *communicated* in some form and degree to a non-participant. A child, spinning around in a billowing skirt will possibly experience something akin to aesthetic pleasure herself, but the response that she will awaken in the onlookers will more likely be some degree of tenderness. This is not dance, in the sense in which I speak of it.

Dance shares with acting and musical interpretation a degree of transience that is unknown in other arts. It is an art embodied in the human body of the artist, an art without inanimate material expression outside the world of humans. This is its charm and its failing. It is what gives all 'show business' its strange and terrible urgency.

Until the turn of the century there was no way of recording the achievement of a theatrical artist. Painters and poets occasionally jotted their impressions of a dancer or singer, but even they would be apt to see in the performance what the age saw, and a great artist has at least one or two things to convey that his own age will not admit to its consciousness. Thus, later generations were left to snatch at fragments of legend and memoirs and to guess at significances that they were better equipped to absorb.

The overall critical survey necessary for any analytical breakdown of an art is not feasible unless there are readily available some records of past achievements. Nor, without records, would such analysis suggest itself to the critics. The history of painting, for example, from paleolithic drawing to the most recent daubs of 1955

can be traced, and conclusions of determinable value can be drawn because we have the primary sources, the drawings themselves, available.

Since the turn of the century, however, this lack of records has been remedied in some degree. Even the earliest snapshots provide us with a better idea of the art of Nijinsky or Wigam than would have been possible formerly. And the cinema has immeasurably improved our capacity for the preservation of things past.

However, what high fidelity recording has done for the musician, and the cinema, to a lesser extent, for the actor, has yet to be achieved in the case of the dance, in which the spatial quality of movement is more important than it is in acting. One of the most enlightening pages in a choreography is the floor plan, i.e., a diagram of the movement of the dancers in relation to each other on the stage. Similarly, the best seat at a dance program, for the student of choreography, is high up in a balcony where he can watch the dancers in their relations to the space they have to work with. None of this comes across on a screen.

Instead, a new art form has developed—dance specifically created for the movies. This usually depends less on dancing and more on the wonders of trick photography. Of the three people with whom I went to see the 'Red Shoes' the only one who was genuinely well-pleased was a photographer. The others, dancers, couldn't see enough of what, in their terms, was 'going on.'

When an attempt at 'straight' dance *is* made, the photographer is left with a choice between two evils. Either he shoots the whole thing from the front, thereby showing it as it would be seen in a theatre, but without the depth that the stage affords, or in an effort to get the feeling of depth across, he resorts to angle shots which distort the choreography and confuse the spectator. The most common technique combines the two, and adds close-ups of feet or face. The result is utter chaos. The audience is not always sure *whose* feet are bouree-ing madly across the screen, or how and where the danseur got down from his leap in time to support that young woman in her angle-shot pirouette.

Granted that there is still a good deal that remains to be tried in fitting the movies to record spatial movement, still, it is doubtful whether even this versatile medium can be stretched to fill the bill for dance.

Even more recent has been the extensive development of Labanotation which records movement on a vertical staff much as music is recorded on a horizontal one. There is no doubt that this will prove invaluable to the development of dance as an art. But it should be borne in mind that Labanotation can record only the

choreographer's art, never the performer's. To date the two have often been thoroughly blended: in modern dance especially the performer is frequently choreographer as well, and even in the ballet, dances are made or changed arbitrarily to fit the dancers. A separation of composition and performer—such as has been in effect for centuries in music—should bring about some interesting and unexpected results in the dance.

Although the above-mentioned vehicles of recording dance are still too new to afford data of permanent value, they certainly indicate that it is time to apply the same standards of criticism and acuteness of analytic perception to the dance that have long been in order in the other arts.

In *The A B C of Reading*, Ezra Pound provides a sound and useful method for looking at poetry. He divides its effects into those produced by logopoeia ('using a word or group of words in some special relation to "usage"'), melopoeia ('charging the word by sound') and phanopoeia ('using the word to throw a visual image on the reader's imagination').

The significance of these divisions lies in the fact that they classify a work of art according to the *means by which* a reaction is produced in a spectator, rather than by the type or degree of the reaction itself. The advantage of this type of criticism is that it concerns itself with relatively knowable qualities: qualities inherent in the object itself, and not buried deep in the psyche of the spectator. This immediately provides the aesthetic critic with more determinable, more measureable and in every way more accessible data than the subjective approach allows.

I have attempted to apply this method to the dance, that is, to determine the *means* by which dance, as an art in modern western culture, produces its effect on an audience. I have considered only those types of dance with which the western world, and I myself are familiar: the ballet and modern dance. I have not included dance as a participator's sport or art: ballroom or 'social' dancing, folk dance, and the like, for I am concerned solely with the factors involved in communicating an experience to a non-participating audience, as is the case in the graphic arts, etc.

However, in applying this perspective to the forms of dance with which I am more familiar, I have unearthed an interesting distinction, which may have valuable applications to other dance forms, and may even be extended to some of the other arts.

I found that there are two distinct antithetical elements in the dance which can produce the desired effect on an audience: posturing, or the resolution of movement in a 'picture,' and movement itself.

In the first approach, motion is used for the *sake* of the 'picture,' and successive, opposing statements are contained in a series of stills. Movement is relatively simple: each gesture is related to something outside the sphere of movement—some emotion, action, or object in life itself; in much the same way as the themes and counterthemes in a symphonic poem are related to the program.

Since it does not derive its significance from the sphere of movement in the abstract, but from the sphere of external reality, a single gesture taken out of context would mean more or less what it means in the dance. It is clear that dance based on this approach has no choice but to use movement as the *means by which* the dancer makes a statement of body form for the purpose of portraying one phase in a 'story' which is centered in life and outside the world of pure motion. This type of dance is at its most effective in broadly defined movement with frequent pauses to let the feeling of the picture establish itself in the audience's mind.

In the second approach, movement exists for its own sake, and has no connotation outside the sphere of motion. Each gesture derives its significance from its context, that is, from the movements that precede and follow it. A movement is not a sort of artistic shorthand for telling a story. Taken out of context, it could mean almost anything.

Since a gesture has no assigned role, the audience is not assured of established, permanent reactions. The spectator does not make quick mental breaks to relate the movement to life. The result is a sort of counterpoint of movement, which is capable of inducing a complex of emotions in the spectator. The force of the dance is in the tensions built up by quick, precise, continuous movement, in much the same way that tension is built up by the movement in a four-part fugue.

Most modern dance falls into the first category: it is the picture that counts. One of its early basic concepts, the concept of 'contraction' and 'release,' accounts for much of this. By reducing dance to a sort of struggle between outward and inward tensions, it simplifies movement in the extreme, and the only contrasts possible are the obvious contrasts of opposites. There are, so to speak, only two 'kinds' of movement: the movement of contraction and the movement of release. Thus, the basic 'plot' or struggle is inherent in the nature of the medium.

On the other hand, the basic movements of the ballet spring from the second approach to dance. A plie or a battement has no specific emotional significance. The still picture, when it is used at all, comes as a long-awaited resolution of the constantly building tension, and is analogous to the tonic chord that ends a fugue.

That ballet derives its emotional impact from movement itself and not from the picture presented on stage can best be seen by taking a look at a part of ballet where this seems to be least true: the adagio. Yet, even here, we do not respond to this particular arabesque, this attitude croise, but to the slow-motion evolution of each pose from the preceding, and perhaps to the breathtaking control which achieves it. Once again, not the picture, but the movement itself, moves us.

In general, the most effective balletic stories still tend to be eighteenth century fairy tales—mere skeletons on which to hang movement, or a means for exploring primarily the qualities of movement. Modern dance is more dependent on the story it is telling, since its movements are more connected to specific emotional states. The story or message receives far more emphasis and comes across with greater efficiency. This is why modern dance rather than ballet has become the vehicle for social criticism, propaganda, and 'psychological' dance.

Ballet, on the contrary, is 'dance for the sake of dance' in the finest sense. It is the exploration of the relationships between movements, simply in the sphere of movement; in much the same way that 'pure music' explores relationships between chromatics purely in terms of sound.

No choreographic work uses one of these methods exclusive of the other, but in almost any work one method predominates. Nor is this generalized distinction between modern dance and ballet always valid. I shall mention here just two outstanding works in which it fails to hold.

In 'The Moor's Pavanne,' Jose Limon manages to achieve what very little modern dance has accomplished so far. In spite of the compelling nature of the story upon which the work is based, he goes beyond the story. It is the movement of the dancers, and their patterns in relation to each other, which is to say the dance itself without reference to plot, that sweeps the audience before it.

Whereas, in the Jerome Robbins modern ballet, 'Age of Anxiety,' most of the impact is in the story—which is well documented with pauses and poses and an almost unprecedented number of stage tricks. You are dragged forward, protesting all the way, until, assailed by Mr. Bernstein's overpowering score, ingenious staging, and the fine dancing of Nora Kaye, you succumb to the very powerful spell of the piece, which is the spell of its message.

In capable hands, either method can produce fine art. The question of which method is productive of greater art boils down to a question of whether you like your beauty with a message, or prefer to take it neat.

Thus far, I have dealt only with familiar forms of dance. Before closing, however, I would like to suggest tentatively that the distinction in method which I have attempted to describe above may apply to other forms of dance, and possibly even to other art forms.

For example, Hindu dance might be called posturing *par excellence*, while most African dance compels a response to movement within its own sphere. As a tourist in both these cultures, I leave the question open. I have no way of knowing how such art forms act upon those who grew up in their tradition.

As regards the other arts, I would suggest that the fine line drawing of the present century bears a close kinship to a method that hits home through movement and tension, with its resolution held in abeyance. Perhaps the method of some of the finished oils of the old masters has a resemblance to the method of 'posture' in dance? I leave this to the critics.

In the field of music analogy is more obvious. We have several times referred to baroque forms to typify the contrapuntal, tense feeling of dance based primarily on movement. Probably the heavy, chordal work of the nineteenth century romantics is to a degree similar in method to 'posturing.'

However, one should not take such comparisons too seriously. It is a temptation to glibly connect 'posturing' with overstatement, or romanticism, or didacticism in art and to tie up 'movement' with disciplined understatement, or classicism, or an art for art's sake doctrine. There may be some connection between these factors, partly because disciplined art, since it is more deliberate, tends toward the complex and contrapuntal. However, they are *not* the same thing, and to confuse them would be as foolish as to believe that modern dance is a vehicle for socialism, simply because modern dance is capable of getting a message across and one of the favorite messages of the day happens to be socialism.

All in all, there are two approaches to the dance, backed by distinct philosophic views of art: this distinction should prove to be of some value in the analytical criticism of the dance that is for the first time becoming possible.

Summer Abstraction

It would burn your mind's eye
in paper brown midsummer
to hold a gull against the sky
for the odd moment of his tilting.

An agile tormentor, he'd be
achieving, almost to your distraction,
the singular and innocent V,
unheeding the stark season.

Whether by reason of the blue
(where he is too soon drowned)
or the whiteness of his true
frozen figuring, you'd find

that image sullenly returning
into your mortal shifty mind
to teach that beauty is a kind
of brightly abstract burning.

George Garrett

The March Problem

The wind became a green idea.
The crows were out of place.
That color didn't suit their taste
or advance their bleak career.

The concept started to careen.
They plead a fervent case.
The wind became a green idea.
The crows were out of place.

It was wonderful to hear
them flaunt against their fate;
two shrill ascetics, born too late,
denounced the technicolor leer.
The wind became a green idea.

George Garrett

The Coldest Winter

By JOAN MAUNEY

Everyone on our street knew old Mrs. Honeycutt. She and her husband lived alone in a big white house that had an old-fashioned veranda across the front. Mr. Honeycutt worked in his wood shop all day, and people never saw Mrs. Honeycutt except when they went to visit her or when she came out of the house for her walks to the store.

She weighed only seventy pounds, and when she went to walk, we children always followed her until we saw the glass door bang shut behind her. We were sure that the wind was going to whisk her right up into the air and blow her around over the housetops. Her hair was drawn to the back of her head in a little white knot, and her legs were thin as golf clubs, but she could walk as fast as any of us. Her face was round, and its wrinkles seemed to draw her eyes and nose toward the center, like the string on the end of a piece of sausage. There were wrinkles around her lips, too, and she looked as if she were saying Ooooooh.

Mrs. Honeycutt must have always been cold. In the summer afternoons when she went to the store, she wore her blue wool shawl and pulled it tight around her shoulders. They made her look even colder, for they were pitifully stooped. In the fall, when we were just beginning to wear sweaters and light jackets to school in the chilly mornings, Mrs. Honeycutt got out her heavy winter coat and green knitted scarf and her black leather gloves with the rabbit fur inside. Though our Southern weather was mild, she didn't come out at all during the winter.

Whenever we walked by the old white house on our way home from school we wondered what Mrs. Honeycutt could be doing in there. Elmer said he bet she was in bed with twenty-eight blankets piled on top of her, and Claudia thought she was sitting by the stove, with her feet stuck up on the warmest part. But I knew that they were wrong. I knew she was sitting in her wooden rocker by the fireplace. Mother had taken me to visit her several times in the winter, and that's what she was doing. I don't remember ever seeing a stove in her house—except the old wood stove back in the kitchen. But every room had a fireplace. Mrs. Honeycutt didn't keep every fireplace lighted, though. And that's why I didn't like to visit her.

We would have to climb up the high front steps and wait on the veranda while she came to the door. She was hard of hearing, so usually we had to wait at least five minutes, and once my mother stepped inside the front door and called to her. After we got inside, Mrs. Honeycutt would say, "I'm just sitting back here in the parlor where it's warm. You folks come on back here." And off she would go through the long dark hall to the back parlor where it was warm. I walked very fast through that hall, for it smelled old and its darkness made me afraid that something might reach out and grab me.

There was a bureau sitting just inside the hall. It had a mirror in the center and drawers down each side. Once when Mother went down the hall, I jerked open the top drawer to see what Mrs. Honeycutt kept in there right out where anyone could steal it. The drawer was full of candles—old ones, all colors and all lengths, with charred wicks and tallow that still clung to the sides. I pushed it shut and ran on down the hall, reminding myself to look in another drawer the next time I had a chance.

I liked those drawers, but I felt uncomfortable around that mirror. It was wavy and had cut designs all around the edges. Some of the designs were chipped, and I thought the mirror was the ugliest thing I had ever seen. In fact, the whole black bureau with its cracked, peeling finish and wavy mirror was something of an inert monster to me.

When we got to the back parlor, Mrs. Honeycutt would shut the door. She had to shut it three or four times before the latch would catch. The door knob was one of those old white ones that look like a bathroom fixture, and the metal that held the keyhole was dented and loose. Usually I would run over and shut the door hard for her. Then she would pick up the poker and stab at the fire. I noticed how much she looked like that poker, for it was bent, too.

One of the logs would fall to the bottom of the fireplace, letting a bright flame escape suddenly, and some red sparks would fly out onto the hearth. She would brush them back into the fireplace with a few brisk strokes of the little yellow broom that hung by the mantle. I always jumped when the fire popped, but Mrs. Honeycutt seemed never to hear it.

She would put the poker back into its stand and sit down in her rocker, pulling her blue shawl tighter as she rocked. Her husband had made the chair—he had made almost everything in the house besides the antique pieces her parents had left her. Once he had been a good carpenter, but now that he was old and suffered from arthritis his work didn't sell, so he kept most of it there in the house. The rocker was one of his more recent pieces, and it rocked with a bumpy sound made bumpier because Mrs. Honeycutt rocked

half on and half off a long, rounded hooked rug. She never seemed to notice that she was bumping over the edge of the rug, or if she did, she didn't say anything about it.

Even though she couldn't be out in it, the first thing she talked about was the weather. "I heard the man on the radio say it was thirty-two degrees outside today. Is that the truth? Well, you don't catch me sticking my nose outside the house in weather like that. Why, I'm liable to get it frozen right off." When Mother assured her that it was indeed a very cold thirty-two degrees, they moved on to the grocery store and talked about Mr. Beatty going up on his flour.

I didn't like to listen to them, so I played with Mrs. Honeycutt's yellow cat Calvin. Calvin was seventeen years old and felt he belonged there. He would let me pet his head, but I knew he didn't really love anybody but Mrs. Honeycutt. Anytime she would lean over and say, "Come, Kitty Calvin," he would leave me and jump on her lap. I wished that Kitty Calvin would love me, too, but I told myself that he only loved old people because he was an old cat himself.

When Mother saw that Mrs. Honeycutt was getting tired, she would say, "We'd better be going now, Mary Michael. Kiss Mrs. Honeycutt goodbye." I would walk over to her rocker and kiss her cheek. It felt cool and so smooth that I didn't notice the wrinkles. I liked her eyes. They looked bright and very black when I stood so close to her. She smelled like a violet, and I usually took more than one sniff.

We would tell her goodbye then and walk back through the long hall. It felt even colder, after coming out of the warm back parlor, and I was always glad to get back to our house, where it was warm in all the rooms.

In the spring, when the tulips bloomed and the children hid Easter eggs, Mrs. Honeycutt would start coming out for her walks to the store. There was a slight hill in front of our house, and whenever she walked that way she would lean over as if she were climbing straight up the side of a steep mountain. I noticed how much she resembled the picture of the Leaning Tower of Pisa in my geography book.

Actually, Mrs. Honeycutt didn't need to go to the grocery store, for she could order by telephone, as she did in the winter. I heard my father say one day that she took the walks because she was old and she was afraid that once she stopped moving around she would die. I wondered why she just didn't go to walk instead of always going to the store, but I guess she liked people to think she had a reason besides just exercise for those trips.

We all knew that she was old—she must have been at least eighty—but somehow I always thought of her as something that would go on and on living and always be there in the white house with the veranda. I couldn't tell she was getting older, for I was a child and she always looked the same to me, but my parents noticed that she stopped taking her walks earlier and earlier in each fall and that it was well into April before she came out from her winter isolation. They realized that one day very soon she was going to die. But they were not prepared for the things that Mr. Honeycutt started telling his customers and, in fact, anybody who came into his shop.

One afternoon in October, just after I had entered the third grade, Elmer and I were walking home from school a different way. We heard the buzz saws from Mr. Honeycutt's shop and decided to stop in and see what he was making. Mr. Honeycutt had a big round stove in the middle of the shop, and the floor was covered with shavings. There were shelves all around the walls, and most of the time there was a pale wood dust on everything. I liked the way the shavings smelled when the stove was burning and it was warm in the shop. Sometimes he made something out of cedar or pine, and then it smelled better than ever.

That afternoon he was working on a cabinet. The machine he used had a rubber conveyor belt that hummed around and around, and once Elmer touched it with his finger while it was turned on.

I told Mr. Honeycutt I had seen Mrs. Honeycutt going to the store yesterday. (I didn't know how to talk to old people very well, and that was the only thing I could think of to tell him). He kept on working and said, "You did, eh? Well, I'll say this much . . . if she wants to get out and run around with other men while I'm down here working, let her go right ahead. Yessir. Let her go right ahead. She thinks I don't know where she goes. Just because she comes back she thinks it's all right. But I reckon I'm not blind yet. I know where she goes. She'll get what's coming to her one of these days."

I didn't understand what he meant, but I was sure it was important, and I tried especially hard to remember it. When I got home I told Mother what Mr. Honeycutt had said when Elmer and I stopped by his shop. She didn't seem very interested, but after dinner I heard her talking to my father. She was telling him exactly what I had told her. I heard my father say then that Mr. Honeycutt had said the same thing to Harry Leonard, our neighbor, and to a lot of people. "I tell you, Catherine, that old man is losing his mind. Why, how he could think that the poor woman is . . . why, she's eighty if she's a day."

And of course Mr. Honeycutt *was* wrong. He went on with his

tales whenever anyone came into the shop and would listen to him. Soon no one paid any attention to him, and the excitement died down. Everyone had forgotten it until Mrs. Honeycutt died.

It was in January, and she died of pneumonia. The neighbors were sorry, but they had been expecting something like that to happen. The Davises next door went over to stay with Mr. Honeycutt, and Mrs. Sherrill across the street sat up with the body.

The night before her funeral Mother and Daddy took me with them when they went to the house. It was the first time I had seen a dead person, and I was looking forward to it in the way I felt when I leaned forward with my head against the windshield whenever my father drove over a dead dog in the road. It was something I wanted to see, yet I knew I would be sorry once I had looked.

When we got to the house, all the lights in the front rooms were on, and it occurred to me that this was the first time I had ever seen a light on in those rooms. We climbed up the front steps, and Mrs. Sherrill met us at the door. As soon as we had stepped inside, I was conscious of an odor that was both sweet and old. Flowers in baskets were lined up around the walls, and some stood on little wire stands. Most of them were pale blues and pinks, but I noticed that one of the ribbons on a wreath was deep red. A piece of fern tickled my leg, and I turned around to look at the basket of flowers standing behind me. The flowers were pale yellow, and a big yellow satin bow was tied around the handle. I touched the ribbon and was surprised that it was so stiff.

Ladies were standing around with white handkerchiefs wadded up in their hands, but I noticed that no one was crying. They were whispering, and I thought their whispers sounded very business-like. One woman came over and patted me on the shoulder. It was good to look up towards the ceiling and see at least one face that was looking at me.

Daddy took me by the hand, and we walked over to the corner of the room where Mrs. Honeycutt was lying in her casket. I started to put my hands on the edge of it so I could pull up and get a better look, but Daddy touched my arm and shook his head. So I stood on tiptoe and looked at Mrs. Honeycutt. She looked very white, and I wondered if someone—Mr. Beatty, perhaps—had dusted her face with flour. I knew it wasn't powder, because I had never seen any of Mother's that was that white. I looked closer and saw that some of the white dust was in her wrinkles. Her eyes were shut so tight I could see a blue vein making a ridge in her eyelids. She was wearing a blue dress, and there was a beautiful sparkly pin at the collar. I thought how nice that pin would look on my new red coat. I looked up and saw a corsage of pink roses pinned to the white

satin in the top of the casket. I pulled Daddy's coat. He bent down, and I asked him if he didn't think they should take that corsage off. When they closed the top I knew the leaves were going to scratch Mrs. Honeycutt's face. Daddy wouldn't take it off, though, and he was so tall he could have reached it very easily. All he said was, "Don't worry about it, honey."

He tried to take my hand then, but I wasn't ready to leave. I knew this was the last time I was going to see Mrs. Honeycutt, and I wanted to look a little longer. Her hair was pulled tight away from her face, and I almost reached out and touched it. I wanted to know how a dead person's hair felt.

The only thing I noticed that was different about Mrs. Honeycutt besides the whiteness of her skin was that her mouth wasn't round anymore. It wasn't saying Ooooooh. It wasn't saying anything. Her lips were spread out in two thin lines, and they looked as blue as her dress to me. Daddy took my hand again, and I knew I would have to go with him this time. I looked up at the pink rose corsage in the top of the casket. Its green leaves and the scratchy fern around it made me feel sad. "Goodbye, Mrs. Honeycutt," I said.

Before we left, Mother and Daddy and I went down the hall to the back parlor to see Mr. Honeycutt. He was sitting in Mrs. Honeycutt's rocker. But he wasn't rocking. He was whittling on a piece of wood. Kitty Calvin was lying on the hooked rug, wide awake. He had his paws tucked under the edge of his fur, and his eyes were open and very, very dark. I wondered if he knew Mrs. Honeycutt was dead. I walked over to pet him while Mother and Daddy talked to Mr. Honeycutt, but he got up and ran into the kitchen.

In a few minutes we started back down the hall. But Mr. Honeycutt didn't get up. He kept sitting in the rocker and whittling on the piece of wood. I peeped back into the room. He was looking hard at his piece of wood and saying over and over, "Well, folks . . . one thing's for sure. She won't be coming back." He flicked a chip of the wood into the fire. "Nope. She sure won't be coming back this time."

西湖

蘇軾

畢竟西湖六月中
風光不與四時同
接天蓮葉無窮碧
映日荷花別樣紅

The Chinese of Soo Su

West Lake

Nothing is like West Lake in June
Scenery then surpasses the season
Lotus leaves fade into a green sky
Lillies reflect a red sun.

Charleen Whisnant

A Step Towards Home

By WILLIAM GRONINGER

"Listen," Townsend said, "I got my fill of the park this morning. Let's try some other place."

"There's a good place down at the end of the block," his wife said, pointing. "Over where the fence is."

They were standing in the yard of the house they had occupied for three weeks now, waiting for their two-year-old daughter to complete her inspection of the wheels of the car parked in the driveway. Across the street some neighborhood boys were playing kick-ball. One of them, a plump boy of about fourteen, at least two years older than the rest, seemed to be directing operations.

"Hey, listen, you got to kick the ball to *me*!" he was saying in tones of exasperation. "You got to kick it to *me*!"

"Ahh, you got no sense!" one of the other boys yelled from what in baseball would be left field. The plump boy promptly charged and the other boy as promptly turned tail and ran. After about ten yards the plump boy quit, and, apparently satisfied, returned to the pitcher's mound. The other boy, after shouting once more, "Well, I say you got no sense!" went back to his position. When the boy in the batter's box kicked, he kicked the ball straight into the plump boy's hands, who picked it up and ran with it to home plate and yelled, "Yer out! Yer out!" In left field the rebel went "Thuuuuup!" with his mouth, but moved into first base, the next step toward home, Townsend remembered.

"There's always a fat guy," Townsend said, watching the boys change positions in the unseasonably bright Sunday afternoon sunshine.

"What?" his wife said, distracted by their young daughter. "Linda! Come here! *Linda*!" In bright red snow clothes, too warm for the weather, the child was straying. At her mother's admonishment she stopped, looked around, then went on.

"I said there's always a fat guy," Townsend repeated, still watching the game. "When I was a kid there was this guy Tubby. We called him Tubby behind his back but we always respected the hell out of him."

"Not on Sunday," his wife said. "Don't say hell on Sunday. It's bad luck. *Look* where she's going now! *Linda*! See? She doesn't mind me at all!"

"C'mere, poop," Townsend called. "Get your butt over here." The child stopped, looked around, and came running. "That's a real run," Townsend said happily. "Get that hip action." The child Linda ran with her body on a plane, moving only her legs. "From the back she looks like Crazy-Legs Hirsch."

"Crazy *who*?" his wife asked. "And I *wish* you wouldn't use those words around her. She's getting to the age where she'll start picking them up."

"Okay, okay," Townsend said. "I'm sorry. Let's not fight about it."

"Well, you're not around her all day. Your first Sunday home in over three weeks and instead of making her mind me you enjoy seeing her disobey me."

"So I've been working, so I'm sorry," Townsend said. And he was. He had missed a lot, those three weeks. He missed the Sunday papers and a second cup of coffee. He missed his wife and the way she was on Sunday morning. Not passionate, but waking up with the wrinkles still in her face from the way she slept, her arm over her eyes, when he could sleepily but with a slow-coming passion reach over and slip his hand under the pajama top she wore despite his comments about sorority girl clothes and cup her breast in his hand. "I've missed a lot, you know that?"

"I've missed it too," she said smiling, seeing it in his eyes. He put his arm around her clumsily. "We'd better catch up to our child."

"My first Sunday in the new place and you walk the legs off me. Can't you make me take a cold shower like most wives do?"

His arm around her, they began walking down the street toward the spot his wife had pointed to.

"How do you feel?"

"How the hell *should* I feel? Somebody had to drink the liquor."

It was a topic they had avoided all day. After three weeks on the new job, after what he had been so sure was a good start, they'd had a party the night before and only two couples out of the twelve or so he had invited had shown up. The office had seemed such a casual, informal place, and he'd said in what he had thought was the proper casual, informal way, "My wife and I are throwing a little cocktail party Saturday night. Hope you can come." And his wife had dipped into their small savings and come up with appetizers, gin and vermouth enough for an army only to have just the two couples, new men like himself, show up. They had stayed for about half an hour that had passed in long, agonizing silences between attempts at conversation, then left

"I must have broken an unwritten law," Townsend said. "Every office has its own set. Jesus Christ, I'm the boy who should know *that*."

"You can see it from here," his wife said, pointing. "Behind that little house. One thing about living on the outskirts, there are plenty of places to walk to."

The large area she pointed to was about the size of six or seven football fields laid side-by-side and had an institutional look to it, Townsend decided. The field, if you could call it that, was well-kept and sloped up until it was lost in a grove of trees.

"Maybe you can find a basketball around," his wife said as they walked toward the field. "There's a basketball backboard up. I've seen it when I've driven past. You're always bragging so. I'd like to see you play once."

"I used to be pretty good," he said without modesty. It was the only thing he'd done better than he'd talked about. Maybe that's why I don't talk about it so much, he thought. He'd played ball at the Home and later in the army, and after that with a semi-pro outfit during his abortive attempt at college. The rest, the other things he'd talked so well about, hadn't turned out. The things he was going to do, the way it'd be with them, none of that had turned out at all. But *we're* okay, he told himself. As long as I have *that*.

"I wonder why the fence?" Townsend asked.

"It's not much of a fence," his wife said. "Just a farmer's fence. You make it sound like a prison wall or something."

"I don't like *any* kind of fences," Townsend said. "You can have my share of the best goddamned fence ever built."

"Well, I think it's a home of some sort," his wife said. "I'm pretty sure it is, as a matter of fact. This one morning I saw an older boy driving a truck and he had a bunch of kids in the back. They drove down that road there, inside the fence, turned around and drove back. They did that about five times. I guess it's the only recreation they have. That, and the basketball court."

"A home?" Townsend said, suddenly cold. "In this neighborhood?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"Look, maybe we'd better walk through the park again," Townsend said, halting at the open gate. Now, standing at the foot of the fields he could see through the trees that topped the grove the base of the grey buildings.

"Oh, come on," his wife said. "The ground's nice and if she falls she won't hurt herself. Besides, I want to see you play basketball. I was a sucker for athletes at school."

The child had gone on ahead of them and was forging her way toward the basketball backboard.

"They're probably at supper or something," Townsend said, hanging back. "It's after five. And they might get sore if they see us wandering around. They're pretty strict at places like this."

"Oh, come on!" his wife said.

Reluctantly Townsend followed his wife. When they got near the basketball backboard they could see it was part of a regulation set-up. The court was of tar, with faded lines marking the boundaries and the free-throw areas. Only one backboard, the remnants of what Townsend took to be an old-fashioned leather net hanging from its ring, was still standing. The other backboard was down, its pole broken off at the base.

"They always look so damn sad when you see them down like that," Townsend remarked.

His wife gave a little shiver. "Maybe we *shouldn't* be here," she said.

"You getting cold?" he asked her, noticing the shiver. "It's getting chilly. Maybe we'd better go back."

"No, I'm fine. It's just that, oh, I don't know. *Something.*"

"It's probably the home. They're not very pleasant, are they?" he asked, watching her closely.

"It's just my imagination working over-time, I expect," his wife said. "They're just kids. I see them all the time going to school. They wear uniforms and all. And you can hear the bell every morning around six. At least *I* hear the bell."

He said nothing, remembering the bell. He still couldn't stand listening to bells. Or seeing playground equipment, especially on a gravel yard. Every morning they had raked the gravel, carefully taking out all the foot-prints. They weren't allowed to use the playground equipment until an important visitor came, and then they were instructed to rush out over the gravel yard and play. Now you get out there and *play!* He still remembered that.

"*Linda!*" his wife called suddenly. "Don't you see what she's *doing?*" she said to her husband. Then, to the child, "Leave the doggie alone, baby."

The child was bending over an old mongrel dog, patting it. The dog looked up briefly from munching something Townsend could not make out, wagged its tail, then went back to eating.

I wonder why I never told her? Townsend thought, watching his wife running over to the child. In the same instant, he knew. He hadn't dared risk it. Not with her father. Their romance now seemed almost a cliché, although at the time it was all very new.

The strong and wealthy (no, that was a little strong; certainly well-off middle-class, he decided) father-in-law, his own refusal to join the firm, partly for fear of losing his identity but mostly because of a fear of failing in something his father-in-law had been a success at, after all attempts at breaking up the romance had failed.

Remembering clearly now, he had first told her he was cut off from his family, the romantic blacksheep, intending later to tell her the truth, after they were safely married. When they were married he had taken ten or so of the wedding invitations, telling her, "It won't do any good, but I'll send them anyway," and later burning them, not knowing about how it would be in church, with the groom's friends and relatives on one side, the bride's on the other, trying not to see now as he had seen it then, coming from the side chamber with his best man (her brother) and the one side of the church filled and the other vacant except for the over-flow from her side. I don't even know for sure what my real name is, he thought. I can't tell her *that*.

"Oh, that *child*!" she said, returning.

"Listen," he said a little more desperately than he intended, "let's cross the fence over there and explore the field."

"All right," she said, taking his arm.

They had got about two steps when a loud peal of the bells stopped them. The buildings at the top of the rise suddenly disgorged a horde of children, who tore out and into other buildings like a disturbed ant-hill.

"Wait," his wife said. "Maybe they'll come down to play basketball."

"No," he said, but stopped too. "Now's the time for prayers. I mean, it's Sunday and I imagine they have evening prayers."

"Here come two, anyway," his wife said, holding his arm. Then, with a laugh, "*This* one looks like he's going to kick us off."

Two boys ran down the slope. One halted, halfway. The other, about thirteen years old, Townsend judged, said something he could not hear, and came on. He was short and rather heavy, and wore iron-rimmed glasses and a blue uniform. Under the backboard and about five yards from Townsend the boy stopped and said, "Are they dead yet?"

For a moment Townsend couldn't grasp what the boy had said.

"Are what dead?"

"Are *they* dead," the boy repeated, jerking his head at the backboard. "We killed six this afternoon. That's what that old dog is eatin'. We caught *them* just before dinner."

Looking up at the backboard, Townsend saw. What he had thought were the remains of a leather net were two garden snakes, both about a foot and a half long, hanging looped over the basketball ring.

"Christ!" Townsend swore despite himself. In the slight, increasingly chilly wind the two snakes swung twisting to and fro.

"Don't you have a basketball?" his wife asked the boy, but gripping Townsend's arm tighter. "My husband wanted to shoot baskets with you. He used to be a fine player."

"The truck ran over it," the boy said. "We all wanted to play this afternoon, but the truck ran over the ball and we couldn't."

"That's too bad," Townsend's wife said.

The boy lingered for a moment longer, then turned and ran back up the hill, saying over his shoulder, "Well, I didn't think they'd last *this* long. They lasted a lot longer than the others."

"One of them's still alive," Townsend said. He hadn't taken his eyes off the two snakes since the boy had directed his attention to them. "It still has its tongue in. That's how you tell."

"Oh, *don't!*" his wife said.

Shaking her arm loose, Townsend went over to the edge of the tar court, searching for a long stick. At last he found something, a long-handled shovel near where the dog was eating the dead snakes. He picked it up and hurried back to the backboard. With the shovel end he poked at the snake that seemed to be alive. It was looped twice over and through the iron supports holding the ring to the backboard, and feebly stuck out its forked tongue under the prodding. Gently Townsend worked at it, trying to get it loose, the strain of holding the heavy weight of the shovel over his head tearing at his shoulder muscles.

"Don't *catch* it!" his wife said. "Oh, *please* don't catch it!"

Hating himself, Townsend let the snake drop to the hard court with a little plop. It wiggled once and was still.

"Maybe if I'd caught it," Townsend said, almost to himself.

"No, it's still alive!" his wife exclaimed, as the snake gave a half wiggle, then another. Townsend scooped it up in the shovel and carried it gently over to the grass. Stooping he gathered a handful of leaves and covered the snake. The child, intrigued by the activity, came over to her father and began throwing leaves into the air, chuckling happily.

"Maybe it'll be okay," Townsend said hopefully. His wife said nothing and he didn't look at her. Returning to the backboard he easily freed the other snake, which hung limply, the string-like tongue dangling out of its mouth. He carried it over to the grass,

dug a shallow hole and covered it. He knew the dog was watching him but said, "The kids'll find this in the morning and make a cross for the head and say a prayer over it," he told his wife. "That's the way they do things at a home." He couldn't tell if she believed him or not.

Silently, not looking at each other, they followed the baby across the home's yard to the barbed-wire fence that separated the yard from the field.

"Help me," his wife said, lifting her skirts. "Don't let me rip my jacket."

After helping his wife, Townsend lifted the child across and crawled through the strands of wire. In the field, tufts of grass and weeds made the walking difficult and the child trailed further and further behind. At last, with a wail, it fell.

Disregarding the wail, Townsend turned to his wife. "Listen, I came out of a home like that," he said. "I meant to tell you. Plenty of times. When we were drinking before dinner; in bed. Times like that. When we were close. Now I want you to know it's not like that. You have to believe it's not like that. You don't put snakes on basketball rings and let them die hanging there just to be cruel. I don't know why you do things like that, but it's not to be cruel."

His wife raised her head and looked straight at him for the first time since they had noticed the snakes. "I've been waiting for three weeks for you to tell me that," she said softly. "Your army discharge papers, the little place for your home address. The papers were under your socks in your drawer. I saw them when we moved this last time."

"I wanted you to know," Townsend said, not really hearing his wife but seeing the snakes twisting slowly in the wind.

"I *do* know," his wife said. "I know that you'd never do anything like that no matter what. I *know* that. And that's all I need to know about you."

They stood facing each other for several seconds, the child's wailing unheeded. Then the wife gave a little shriek.

"The baby!" she cried, and ran back. She picked the child up and returned, mothering her in her arms.

Townsend took the child and swung her up on his shoulder. "No, no!" the child said and Townsend swung her down to the ground again, holding her hand. "No hand!" the child said severely, thrusting Townsend's hand away. She ran off for about a dozen paces and fell again.

"Just like Crazy-Legs Hirsch," Townsend said, laughing. "I swear she's nuts, really nuts!" he said as his wife hurried to help the child. It wasn't what he'd meant to say at all, but it was the only thing he could think of.

from Numerals and Days

XXX

There is flamingo red at dawn
Drawn down to color this bright wheel:
A carnival between the poles . . .
And day spins off another reel.

XXXI

Forget . . . aesthetic reprimand . . .
Conveniently is lost
And memory is more beautiful
Than beauty should demand.

XXXVII

When you had gone I asked of love
If distance might not be
The space that somehow lies between
An ear and symphony.

XXXVIII

Inventive East set forth the sun
Some several billion years ago . . .
And still that agent will refuse
To change the playbill . . . or the show.

Jean Armstrong

Out From the Well

Out from the well of all the loveless,
Walking the walk of large black crows,
You come with big feet and awkward gait.
You amble along stiff-legged, head bent.
Your black thoughts astound the stars.
You make no sound.
You are wordless and make quick slapping gestures.
You tilt your head and take angular views of the world.
You must not stand there so, your head like that.
You frighten me with your looks.
You are black and ugly . . . a winged thing, I think . . .
And you raise your wings like broken umbrellas.

Jean Armstrong

The Harvester

The harvest of regret arrived, and frost,
And yet my lips no sorrowing did grow,
No crop of green and bitter grace. I lost
In mirth the moments solitude may know:
Could I then follow earthly pilgrim men
Through fertile wind-sown continents of sky,
Give root to leaves, the blossoms and the fallen,
Or image hope in other worlds, and die?
Ah, love, all heroes, dreams and gods you yield
Within your full and orchard-fragrant land;
Mine is the fruit till death's ironic hand,
In sowing, clasps the farmer in his field—
But if new wisdom grow in older grain,
I may have need of solitude again.

Alexander Blackburn

God of Life, At Sunset

The fisher-king each morning maws the world
In sudden sweeps through swirling schools of stars,
Some disappearing down his belly's dark,
Some spilling out, those dolphin-flashing stars,
To breed, like beasts of field, their flesh of flame,
For fisher-king to feast on other days.
But now, in beautiful satiety,
This king reclines before my trembling gaze;
The feathery clouds are ruffled by the wind,
And as a bird's head tucks, the dipping sun
Is folded in flamingo-flaring skies:
A ruddy peace, by gulps of fire begun.
And I, in whom so little fire of stars
Flames, will, like other men, that candle-breed,
Leap to the glorious, pecking bill one day,
A little lick.

For epicures have need
Of quick hors d'oeuvres, while dreaming of the fate
Of stars that smoke on evening's silver plate.

Don Geiger

Philosophy and The Art of Fiction

By SAMUEL COVAL

By means of some rather low-powered philosophical analysis I intend to examine what Henry James is doing in *The Art of Fiction*. Though I shall not generalize from this examination there are implied, I think, some unpleasantries for certain kinds of literary criticism, for Realism as a position in literature and for prescriptive aesthetics in general.

It is not my impression that James is doing literary criticism in *The Art of Fiction*. He is rather setting up criteria by means of which value judgments a propos of fiction may be made. The setting up of such a criteriology would be doing aesthetics while the invocation of it in making judgments would be criticism. The sins of the aesthetician are visited upon the critic.

My analysis of James's aesthetic principles will fall into two parts: (a) An analysis of the meaning of the criteria; (b) A reductio ad absurdum of the logic, if you like, of James' theory. Let me begin by laying down barely what are apparently James' aesthetic principles of fiction. For a piece of writing to deserve the name of fiction the following requirements must be met:

- (1) it must represent life
- (2) it must look for truth
- (3) it must be interesting
- (4) it must be real
- (5) it must be perfectly free
- (6) it must be artistic

There occur as well a number of subsidiary terms such as "value" and "intensity" which I believe may be set aside as performing a function clearly apart from the main business of a criteriology. My reasons for this will emerge.

In the field of value as a whole, of which I take aesthetics to be a part, there has been a notorious tendency to blur a distinction which if thus ignored makes a universe of difference both to the intent and to the understanding of what is being said. In any value judgment (henceforth I shall speak only of aesthetic judgment) there is a commendatory element and sec-

ondarily a descriptive element. Thus to say that that is a good (fine, beautiful, artistic, sublime, magnificent and even, well-composed) mural is at least to commend the mural and in that sense to say nothing about the *characteristics* of the mural. Commending is quite different from describing. To say that the mural is good is to say something of at least partially a different order from saying that the mural is, for instance, black. The logics of the word black and the word good are distinct. Property-words and aesthetic-words are of different categories. And they belong to separate categories mainly because of the preponderance of the commendatory element in aesthetic words. I have not denied that aesthetic words contain as well an element of description or, if you like, even reference.

If a professor of literature tells me that Mickey Spillane has written some good novels, I expect that he will have something descriptive in mind such as, say, social consciousness. But there is certainly something more operating there. If it is just a matter of description at which our professor is aiming, why does he not just say that some of Mickey Spillane's novels are socially conscious? I suspect it is because he wants to let me know that he approves (and would like me to approve of) this element, and via it, of some of Spillane's novels. Sheer descriptive language will not do the job for him: he must use the aesthetic. Where is further evidence for these distinctions? It is before our noses in the way we speak. And *that* is where (at least) to begin—not with an examination of the *things* we call good, for they are mute. Let me sum all this up by saying that aesthetic judgments contain primarily a commendatory element and in addition, though not always, a descriptive feature which may vary widely from use to use.

The mistake of expecting that aesthetic words will be *entirely* descriptive when unpacked, that is, will function just as any other adjective, can grossly affect our reading of James (to say nothing of *his* intent). If, as I have suggested, James is doing aesthetics then he would be setting up a criteriology or grading-list of attributes which would correspond to the descriptive element in our aesthetic judgments. The list would have to be descriptive or the principles would be judgment-useless. Criteria must be eliminative and they could not be so were they entirely emotive. (Thus, if using James' principles in painting, we said that Modigliani's nudes are superb, part of our meaning would be that they represent life.) If, however, there is to be commendation at the aesthetic-judgment level there must be commendation at the criterial level. Consequently, when James tells us that representation of life is something that good fiction must have he is commending that

criterion to us. Grasping this will, I believe, help us to understand more clearly, though perhaps to see less in, what James is doing.

What I intend to say, then, about James' fiction criteria is that there is much commendatory padding which must be set aside if we are to get at the descriptive bones of what he has to say. Let us look again at the list. My theory concerning it is this: of the six criteria, only three serve simply to bolster, in the fashion already indicated, (commendatorily) two of the first three. The three that may stand by themselves are (1) it must represent life; (3) it must be interesting, and (5) it must be perfectly free. The others, concerning truth, reality and artistry are to help make these first criteria valuable by commending them. James has in effect used the honorific weight of words such as truth and reality to make 'representation of life' an aesthetic criterion by linking their grammars with that expression. I suspect that "truth" for James is devoid of any descriptive significance whatever. For example: in the same sentence he defines truth as that which the "novelist assumes"; or "the premises we must grant him whatever they may be" and then implies that the novelist is as occupied as the historian in looking for truth. The novelist and the historian are occupied in looking for the premises which they assume? This is patent nonsense. And it becomes such unless we keep in mind that James is using the word "truth" merely honorifically. What he wants to say to us is that the novelist who represents life in his work is looking for truth and that just means that he is doing something worthwhile. James is vesting this criterion with commendation by identifying it with a word which is and can be used in a strictly approbative sense. See what it becomes? To represent life is to look for truth; to represent life is good; to represent life is an aesthetic principle. It seems to me that "real" functions in the same way for James; that is, "representation of life" becomes a quest for reality. James does not make the mistake of attempting to define or otherwise overtly indicate what he means by "real" for to do that would be to divest the word of its commendatory aura. To allow it to function blindly, as it were, does finally involve James in an inconsistency, but that will be apparent in a moment. It is my impression though, that the word is a mightily useful one for James. It does for him the job of bringing value (commendation) into his principles and makes them thus *aesthetic* principles. (The word truth, as I have already suggested, performs the same role.) I shall not labor this further, except to say that (6) "artistic" modifies (5) "It must be perfectly free" in much the same manner.

Earlier I set aside James' use of the words "intensity" and "value." I may now say that these expressions were omitted from the original list because they function so clearly as ancillary in James' vocabulary of aesthetic terms that they would not even for purposes of argument be construed as first-order Jamesian aesthetic criteria. Moreover, these expressions are used by James in a fashion which lays bare (and here we *may* say) a motivation of James'. Apart from setting up a criteriology for judging the novel James is clearly interested in the "honour" of the novel. My impression (and I certainly mean more than that) is that James achieves honour for the novel by crossing the syntax of the word "novel" with such clearly honorific terms as freedom, reality, life, etc. Artistic and already-established endeavours such as painting, philosophy and history are also involved. This heritage-of-the-novel business is clearly not in the main stream of what James is doing in the *Art of Fiction*, but it is certainly there and seems to point up a further use of the dual nature of aesthetic terms. My suggestion is that the words "value" and "intensity" are used by James more to help bolster the honor of the novel than to aid in the criteriology work.

Our original list, then, has been boiled down to three:

- (a) represent life
- (b) interesting
- (c) perfectly free

It seems to be James' position that they are to be accepted as the only *a priori* signs of the novel. But what if anything, can we take these criteria to mean? "Interesting" provides no difficulty—asking and perhaps nose-counting might be sufficient. The other two, unfortunately, seem strangely lacking in descriptive substance. Before we can properly explore them, however, we must enter into the second phase of this paper; that is, examine the logic of James' theory of fiction.

It amounts to this: The author may exercise complete freedom in his choice of subject matter and almost complete freedom in his working out of that subject. We must always go along with the donnee of a novel and ought only to reserve (interest excepted) that what is made of it represents life. Apart from this the novel has no essential eidos. That it catch the "substance of the human spectacle"; that it "offer life without re-arrangement"; that it provide "straight impressions," this is, interest excepted, the only limitation James' criteriology places upon the novel (unless one also construes "complete freedom" as a kind of restriction). James' injunction is that we are to grant a would-be novel its given, but are to check it up with Life.

Suppose we go along with James and accept this. Suppose, however, we ask of him an instance of non-Life in fiction. Would he suggest fairy tales? But apart from the context of make-believe—and isn't this at least a part of the given?—who would deny that even fairy tales can, though obliquely, catch the "substance of the human spectacle" and give us "straight impressions" of "real" moral situations, "real" character and Life in general? Perhaps another reader of James might object that the intention here is to restrict fiction so that it will deal with the ordinary furniture of "reality" and not fairies and Prince Charmings. But what has the ordinary furniture of "reality" to do (necessarily) with catching the "substance of the human spectacle"? Does a "representation of life" necessarily require a photograph or a near-photographic technique? Only if the "representation" is accented. My impression is that James emphasis is upon the "Life" and not upon the "representation." If I am wrong and James is just an *un tranche de vie* man, then the criticism which I am about to make of the "representation of life" position in general will apply with as much, if not more, force.

"Life" is a misleading word. Perhaps because we can say things such as "this is brown," "this is John," or "this is politics," we feel that we are saying something of at least partially the same order when we say that this is Life. But notice that any of the former group of sentences can be used to make true or false statements. Under what conditions would the statement "this is Life" be false? None, I wager. The word Life cannot be misused in that kind of statement. And this is so because in this context the word has no set cognitive (descriptive) meaning. Descriptively, it can be used in any fashion. The question "what is Life?" is then completely misleading if we expect answers such as we might when questions such as "what is brown?" or "what is John?" or "what is politics?" are asked. "Life" is not a property word, not a name and not a general term (though perhaps the most general). My suspicion is that "Life" is a trans-categorical word; it belongs to no particular class of terms and has even broader logical rules than "good." We cannot, for instance, say that the good is bad (excluding irony); but we can say that Life is unreal (and isn't it strange that there is not in ordinary language a clear-cut contrary of "Life"?). The logical grammar of "Life" has no restrictions except that it cannot be used as a connective or copula.

The only answer, then, to the "what is Life?" question would be something such as "everything," (where "thing" is used most nebulously). What then has happened to the "representation of life" criterion? If I am correct, it has become (and indeed was all along) non-restrictive. Of course if James is *using* it in a restrictive sense—

and that is entirely possible—he is saying that the novel must conform to a particular view of what Life is and thus runs aground on his “freedom” criterion. What this boils down to, then, is this: If James is using the word “Life” in a restrictive sense, then he is saying that the novel must be both free, absolutely free *and* must deal with a particular view of life. This possibility would speak for itself. If, on the other hand, he means to use the word non-restrictively, then he has taken thirty pages to tell us that the novel must be free.

James does have a defense. Faced with the charges that his key expression is vacuous or contradictory, and that moreover he is attempting rather slyly to persuade us to what finally is an empty position, he might shrug his shoulders with a characteristic *allons donc*. And, if the point of that were to suggest that it is paradoxical to demand rationality of that which attempts to judge the non-rational, he would have himself the very last word.

This Gaped Sucked Lung

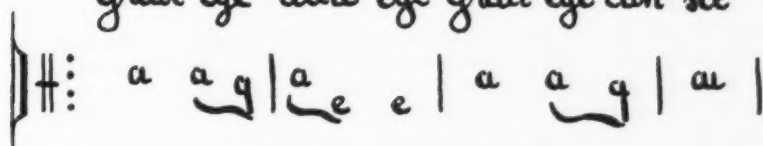
This gaped sucked lung might any lung have been,
This flesh been form of animal and fur,
Or swum the sleep of darkness as the whale
Or been a woman rather than a man,
Or been the color black or the color red,
Been Assyrian, been Jew in Babylon,
Been the Man himself on Calvary,
Been the dove sweeping past his face.

I am a bellowsed blower, sucker of air,
A whimsicality, a shape of form
Who might have crawled blind as a muddy worm
Or swum in salt or from the olives flown,
Who might have been the traitor with his kiss,
Or the giant falling struck by David's stone.

Jack Crawford, Jr.

Shaker Humility Song

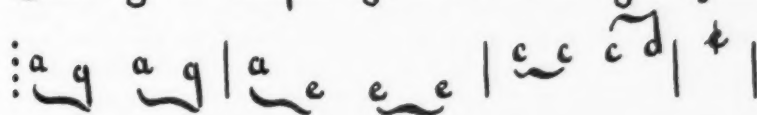
Great eye little eye Great eye can see



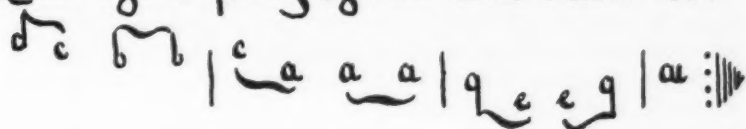
Little eye is pretty eye So little i will be



Little eye is simple eye And little eye is free



Little eye is pretty eye So little i will be.



A Note On

Shaker Humility Song

By D. W. PATTERSON

The Shaker verse on the opposite page appears to be in the style of Gertrude Stein. This might have surprised Miss Stein, for the song was conceived some fifty years earlier than she.

The resemblance is greater than it seems, a matter not only of sound play but of the underlying primitivism as well. In the case of the unknown Shaker author, a strong desire to be like an innocent, will-less child led him quite naturally, if unconsciously, to mold his lines on the frame of the nursery song "Great A, little a, Bouncing B."

This Shaker was expressing through a blend of symbols the core of Shaker belief, the necessity for effacing the self. The sect to which he belonged, introduced into this country by an English prophetess in 1774 and surviving yet, required uniformity in dress, habit and thought, submission to the rule of a "ministry" of elders, and adherence to communism and celibacy. By conforming to the communal life and accepting the doctrines of a dual godhead and the reincarnation of Christ in the person of the prophetess Ann Lee, the Shaker entered at once into the millennium, though he continued a while to be incumbered with the flesh. For the remainder of his term on earth he was allowed to mortify his appetites, to work, and to rejoice in dance and song. Musically, the result was an outburst of creativeness. In the great period of Shakerism—from 1805 to 1845, when communities flourished in New England, New York, Ohio, and Kentucky—a single singer might compose as many as fifty songs in one week's time, although the burden of the effort was admittedly relieved by angels, birds of paradise, and assorted spirits, who often taught songs by way of dreams and visions. The circumstances of the composition of "Great eye little eye" are unknown, but the songs seems to have had moderate circulation among the believers. The version given here is a composite of the best features of several variants.

A word on Shaker notation. The believers were such enthusiasts for perfection that they turned their zeal and ingenuity upon barns and machine parts and even musical notation. In the effort to spread musical literacy in their society they devised dozens of simple

systems. The most often used was that shown in the accompanying plate. Each letter of the alphabet notation has the pitch of its equivalent on the conventional musical staff. As for time values, the eighth note is designated, as in standard notation, by a stem bearing a single flag, the quarter note by the letter alone, and the half note by the letter with a vertical stroke. Tempo was not indicated for "Great eye little eye" in the manuscript source but can be surmised. Shaker tunes generally kept the feet in lively motion.

Ubi Sunt: A Variation

For My Son, Thomas Aquinas

I love you, one, with effort's reasoning labor,
Knowing the while that you, like effort, are dying,
Weighing the virtue, early and stolen, there lying,
Burst on the world in the hurry of catching a savior.
I love you, yes, with the sure patient skill of the craver,
Adapting the smile that history, like patience, comes plying,
Who sees in promise rejected (the cursed-on ensign denying)
Only muscle to nurture, small wisdom to laver.

But for the worst of . . . the old hands of poems are shaking;
Our ancestry cringes with antediluvian fears;
Small corners of learning may reckon your sleep come to waking,
May but watch common floods of but uncommon tears;
And if still for your love, one, so sightlessly God's bells be ringing,
Then failing and dying, oh forth from the womb go singing!

John Maboney

A Telling Tale

By J. A. C. DUNN

Now what would scare the life out of a seventeen-year-old boy? Doolan puzzled and rubbed the back of his shaggy neck as he stood staring out of the window on the landing of the dormitory stairs. What spectacular deed would really shake Lundy? The time had definitely come when Lundy's calm just had to be broken. Lundy was a great guy, Doolan thought; the best of roommates, the perfect partner in crime—except that he never got excited. After all, half the fun of breaking school rules was getting scared, feeling a throbbing in your neck at a tense moment, knowing your eyes were getting wider and wider as you tried to think of the quickest exit, the smoothest lie, the most convincing gimmick.

Doolan loosened his spotty tie, rubbed his neck again, and gazed thoughtfully down at the sweating, straining football team practicing beyond the Chapel in the chill October wind. The only sensible thing to do with football was fake a chronic bad back. But since he had convinced Miss Morgan, the infirmary nurse, that he had a mashed ganglion, or whatever she called it, and had been let off football, he had spare time in the afternoons. He really ought to put that time to good use.

Now this afternoon's adventure had been highly successful and extremely well-executed. Diluting the fifth class science aquarium with hydrochloric acid was something no amateur could do and get away with. That had been a shrewd move: making a wax impression of the key to the door. Now that he remembered it, Bugs sure was keeping a messy science room—leaving a chlorox bottle turned over and spilled like that. Of course he had to admit that the timed-firecracker-in-the-assembly-hall-ventilator job had been sort of bungled. The fuse had been timed to set it off during morning announcements, not during the Lord's Prayer. But this aquarium job would clear him of the firecracker stigma.

And now he had to celebrate. It was getting downright irritating: Lundy just never got frightened. Like the time Lundy was pacing up and down the room with a toothbrush glass full of bourbon and water lecturing extemporaneously on Dorian Grey's depravity, and Mr. Cromwell walked in. Lundy hadn't even flicked an eyelash. When he said he was taking cough medicine, the Crumb was actually sympathetic and offered an electric heater. He, Doolan,

had been scared stiff that time. Drinking was an expelling offense. Or the time when Lundy was on the the roof of the dorm, having forced the lock on the attic skylight to get there, holding four firecrackers, one lit, and the Crumb appeared on the driveway below and waxed inquisitive; Lundy just said he was rescuing a cat, and while the Crumb went off to get a ladder and a rope Lundy coolly dropped the four firecrackers one by one down the chimney into the housemaster's living room fireplace, where they blasted ashes all over the rug and practically scared Mrs. Cromwell out of her maidenform. As a housemaster, the Crumb was a total failure. He couldn't even smell cigarette smoke, he was such a heavy smoker himself.

Here it was four o'clock in the afternoon and in half an hour Lundy would be back from his extra latin class. Half an hour to cook up a scheme that would loosen Lundy's seams. Doolan went on up the stairs and turned down the third floor corridor. There was one smokebomb left and it might go well under Lundy's bed. But that was sort of common. Lundy was too observant not to see through that. He might put a cow in Lundy's bedroom—no, no, they'd already done the cow trick; sort of messed up the music room, too. And besides, the farmer across the road had put up an electric fence now. Cagey joker.

As Doolan passed room 23 he pounded casually on the door and listened with malicious pleasure to the answering yelp. "Shut up, Sinnot," he growled, "or I'll beat your dirty little hide off." Sinnot subsided into petrified silence. How about murdering Sinnot? He was such a little germ, such a completely intolerable disease, for a twelve-year-old. Might tie him to a chair and make it look like a stabbing; but Sinnot would never sit still to be stabbed anyway. And also Lundy would immediately say he had treated Sinnot badly. Doolan was getting a little tired of being lectured by Lundy—on inexpert rule-breaking, bad tactics with masters, harsh treatment of underclassers. Lundy had such queer ideas about underclassers. "Always treat them gently," he said. "Never be familiar, never be friends with them, but don't be a dictator. Underclassers can be used to advantage, but they're no use at all if they hate you because you paddle them." Everyone else, and Doolan in particular, walked on the underclassers like dirt. Kick 'em around and they'll learn to fly straight, was Doolan's policy. But Lundy could make you feel like a worm with that sort of God-like, superior air, and if Doolan 'murdered' Sinnot, that's just what Lundy would do, and there would be the acid stunt all ruined.

But he had to do something. Something gutsy, with blood. Not murder. How about suicide? Suppose he committed suicide, all

jazzed up with gore on the floor and despairing notes pinned to the lapel and so on? That would do it. Beautifully! That red poster paint would be very realistic. Perfect!

Doolan quickened his step down the corridor, rubbing his neck in concentration. He could write the note to end all notes. "Dear Lundy, King George has given me the boot for the firecracker stunt. He said I was a no-good delinquent and a disgrace to the school. You can have the Luger and the rest of the Seagram's and the railroad flares. Tell them to break it to mother gently. The old man would disown me if I went home." And then there would be a really drippy sign-off. Doolan stopped in front of his and Lundy's door at the end of the hall and looked at his watch. A little after four. Just enough time.

Doolan swung open the door and stopped, frozen, on the threshold, his hand still on the knob. Lundy was hanging against the wall next to the radiator with a rope from his neck to the steam pipe up near the ceiling. A chair was lying on its back near his dangling feet and his face was flaming red.

"Dammit, Lundy, what the hell kind of a joke are you trying to pull now? I was going to . . . Lundy?" The dormitory was dead silent. Not a sound came from Lundy. He swung slightly back and forth, hands hanging limp, face immobile, as always. "Lundy? Lundy! God, what have you done?" There was something ugly and real about this. Doolan darted across the room and got his jackknife from the windowsill, and came back and touched Lundy on the arm. Lundy didn't move. Except for the playtalk of the housemaster's children on the lawn outside there was complete quiet. Doolan set the chair upright, climbed on it, reached up and cut the rope. He tried to hold Lundy as the strands parted, but the boy was too tall, too heavy. He slipped past Doolan and fell like a board, full-length on the floor. Doolan got down and turned him on his back. "Lundy . . . Lundy, wake up." He slapped Lundy's face. Lundy didn't move. Then he saw the bloody wrists, the oozing, red, raw scars; there was blood on the wall, too, and on the rug, and even on the blade of the jackknife. Doolan looked frantically for some sign, some clue that would tell him something else. He wasn't even sure what he wanted to know, he just wanted to know more. Lundy's face had turned a creamy color. "p. He must get help. Todd might be on the fourth floor.

Doolan raced out of the room and down the hall to the foot of the fourth floor stairs. "Todd! Todd! You up there?"

After a moment a lazy voice answered, "Yeah, what?"

"C'mere."

"What?"

"C'mere quick."

"What for?" Todd called languidly; he was probably deep in one of his damned psychoanalysis books again. Doolan found it strangely impossible to shout out loud, 'Lundy's killed himself.'

"Hurry up, Todd." Footsteps started toward the stairs, and Todd appeared shirtless and tousle-headed over the banister.

"S'matter?" Then he saw Doolan's face and started down. "What's wrong?" and he quickened his pace.

"Come on," shouted Doolan, and ran down the hall to the room again. Todd pounded close behind him, hurtled through the door, and stopped as if he had run into a stone wall.

"Sweet Jesus in a hayloft! What happened to him?"

"I found him hanging from the pipe with a rope around his neck. Look at his wrists." Doolan felt Lundy's heart. "He's alive, but look at his neck."

Todd fluttered his hand ineffectually around his lips for a moment and the corners of his eyes twitched up into an expression of bewildered incredulity. Then in an instant he rallied.

"Get downstairs and tell the Crumb and telephone the infirmary and tell the nurse to call the doctor and I'll try to wake him up."

Doolan flew out the door and down the back stairs into Mr. Cromwell's kitchen. Mrs. Cromwell was cutting cookies beside the sink.

"Why, hello, Chauncey," she said cordially.

"Where's the Cru—where's Mr. Cromwell?"

Mrs. Cromwell looked mildly interested. He's in his study. You look a little pale. Is something the matter?"

Doolan disregarded her and ran into the study without knocking. "Mr. Cromwell, come upstairs, quick. Lundigan's tried to kill himself."

Mr. Cromwell looked up sharply from the text he was correcting and whipped a pair of thick-rimmed glasses off his lean face. "What?" he said.

"Lundigan's just tried to kill himself, sir. He hung himself in our room. Come quickly, sir."

The housemaster catapulted himself out of the swivel chair and clutched his ear; a deep notch appeared suddenly between his eyebrows.

"Want me to call the infirmary, sir?"

"Yes, right away," Mr. Cromwell snapped, and vanished around the corner. Doolan connected with the infirmary and told Miss Morgan, who was at first incredulous, then fluttered and maternal, and finally, after a few seconds, settled into cool, driving efficiency.

When Doolan got back to the room Lundy was still lying on the floor, but there was a pillow under his head and Mrs. Cromwell was waving a smelling salts bottle back and forth under his nose, while Todd wiped the cold, sweating face and bruised neck and bloody wrists with a wet towel. Mr. Cromwell stood beside them looking down, worried, puzzled. He turned and put his hand on Doolan's shoulder, guiding him out into the hall.

"He's beginning to come round," he said tensely in his deep, rolling voice. "I don't know why his neck isn't broken. He's just half strangled. Probably lost a lot of blood, too. Tell me, what's the name of his girl in New York?"

"Charlotte, sir."

"Charlotte. Charlotte. Just, uh, just what is the situation between him and Charlotte?"

"He's been going with her for two years, sir."

"Hm," said Mr. Cromwell thoughtfully, holding his ear. "He's been calling for someone named Jean. Have any idea who that might be?"

"Yes, sir, she's a girl he knows in Bridgeport."

"I see. Ah, here's the doctor."

It seemed to Doolan an incredibly short time since he had called the Infirmary, but here was the doctor hurrying down the hall, and right after him Miss Morgan. They both swished into the room, their sense of urgency showing through a veneer of official calm, and knelt down beside Lundy, who was moving his head feebly now. Miss Morgan began bandaging Lundy's wrists with the doctor's gauze and the doctor spoke.

"What's the boy's name?"

"John," Mr. Cromwell replied.

"John, did you take any pills?" Doolan caught his breath. He hadn't thought of that possibility. "Listen to me John. Did you take any pills? Did you swallow anything?"

Lundy moved his head and blinked. "Yes," he breathed.

"How many?" asked the doctor, trying to keep his voice unruffled. "Can you remember how many you took?"

Lundy closed his eyes. "Nine," he murmured.

"Where's the bottle? What kind of pills were they?" asked Miss Morgan quickly, momentarily forgetting the presence of the doctor.

"Nine or ten," said Lundy, his voice barely audible.

Mr. Cromwell turned to Doolan. "Did he have any sedatives in his room?"

"Yes, sir, for his asthma."

"Were they strong?" asked the doctor, looking up at Doolan from the floor.

"I don't know. No, they weren't very."

"Well, find them," the doctor and Mr. Cromwell said in unison.

Doolan rushed into the other room. A little grey box, or was it green? Funny, how much you never notice. Not on the bureau; not in the top drawer; not on his own bureau; not on the bed; the floor. On the floor by the closet. Empty. He went back and gave the box to the doctor, who muttered something to himself and began repacking his bag.

"Get him downstairs and we'll take him up to the Shaggran Rest Home right away. The town hospital won't take a mental case."

"Put him in my station wagon," added Mr. Cromwell.

Doolan and Todd and the doctor put Lundy, who was moaning quietly now, on a blanket from the bed and carried him out to the car.

Later, after they had driven him to the Home, and the white-coated attendants had removed the bandages from Lundy's wrists and put on new ones of their own, had stomach-pumped the sedatives out of him and bathed his neck and given him black coffee; and after the doctor and the nurse had left and everything had more or less calmed down, Doolan and Mr. Cromwell returned to the school and sat in the housemaster's living room. Mrs. Cromwell made Doolan sit in a comfortable chair and offered him a glass of sherry to relax with, which he accepted. Mr. Cromwell opened another pack of cigarettes and lit one. Doolan wished he could have one too, to go with the sherry.

"What did the psychiatrist say when he talked to you?" Mr. Cromwell asked Doolan.

"Well, sir, he just asked about Lundy's family and I told him about his mother being dead, and about his older brothers, and his sister running off with a truck driver, and about his father being a pretty smart man but awful hard on his kids. And he asked about Lundy, what sort of a person was he, and I told him all about his quiet spells, and how he never let himself show any—uh—well, you know, emotion about anything, or anything, and about all the high marks he got with hardly any work. And he asked if Lundy'd had any troubles lately, or shown any signs of being inwardly disturbed, or anything, and I told him about those two girls he was tangled up with, and about . . . (Doolan almost said "about Lundy's drinking") . . . well, you know, about those two girls, and his quiet spells, and all that. I can't think why he would ever do a thing like that, can you, sir?"

Mr. Cromwell hung his hand on his ear and said in a thoughtful voice that he couldn't imagine.

"Do you think he'll stay in school, sir?"

"No, I doubt it," said Mr. Cromwell quietly from a shroud of cigarette smoke. "I talked to his father over the phone a few minutes ago and he seemed to think the best thing was to have him home. The psychiatrist thought so too. He'll probably go home in two or three days when he gets calmed down."

"He was always such a *nice* boy," mused Mrs. Cromwell. "So polite and gentle, and—well, so *normal*."

Doolan and Mr. Cromwell sipped their sherry, and their eyes met over the rims of the wineglasses. He knows more than he's saying, thought Doolan. I wonder how much he does know? A master must catch on to an awful lot more than people think.

They emptied their glasses and the fire died down. The boy and the master sat still, meditating the darkening embers, and Doolan felt sort of man-to-mannish, in-on-it, adrift with Mr. Cromwell in the same lifeboat; not plebian and uninformed, hearing and spreading feverish and inaccurate rumors like the rest of the boys.

After a while Doolan said he'd better go upstairs and clean up and get some sleep. He felt terribly tired.

He went up to the room and turned on the light and sank into the rickety old easy chair, weary and a little numb. Lundy, of all people to try a stunt like that. Old iron-nerves—and he seemed so normal after they got him fixed up with coffee and bandages at the Home. Poor guy, he was so scared someone was going to think he was crazy. That had been the first thing he said when Doolan went into the bright, hard, white room after the stomach pump business.

"I'm not crazy," Lundy had said, sitting on the edge of the bed and holding his knees with bony hands. "Don't think I'm a lunatic, because I'm not." And they both had sat there looking at the floor, unable to think of anything to say to one another except meaningless bunches of jerky monosyllables. Lundy would go home now. It was going to feel funny sleeping here alone. He had never had two rooms all to himself in his life.

He went to the door and opened it, listened down the hall, then shut the door, opened both windows, and lit a cigarette. He felt he was entitled to one, after what had happened, and he recklessly blew the smoke toward the ceiling instead of toward the open window, as the accepted system of illegal smoking demanded. Why in the world? What could make Lundy do that?

He went out into the hall and up to room 23 and knocked. A little black-headed boy opened the door, and his face tensed in apprehension when he saw Doolan.

"Sinnot," said Doolan, "go get a—"

"I ain't gonna do anything and you ain't gonna paddle me again," whined Sinnot.

"I'm not going to touch you," said Doolan evenly. "Just get a wet rag and come on down to our—to my room."

When Sinnot came with the rag and started wiping up the dried blood, Doolan was wandering around in the other room. He went over to Lundy's bureau and stood looking at the hairbrush, the shaving cream, the odds and ends of pins, paper clips, and old razor blades all mixed with dust, the little leather jewel box, the history term paper, the . . . What was that? A little piece of paper sticking out from under the jewel box with 'Doolan' written on the visible end. Doolan laid his cigarette on the edge of the bureau, pulled out the scrap of paper and unfolded it. The note was written in a hurried version of Lundy's handwriting.

"Dooly," it read, "I figure maybe you'll come looking around here after it's all over before anyone else will. I don't know what to do with myself anymore. I got into the science room this afternoon and put about a quart of chlorox in the aquarium and I was right in the middle when I heard someone unlocking the door and I got panicky. All of a sudden I saw how stupid it was being in a locked room for no legitimate reason. I went out the window and I guess they knew someone had been in there. It's all so stupid anyway. I think I was just swimming until I sank, like Conrad says. Now I guess I've sunk. Lundy."

Doolan stood unmoving, dazed, while the forgotten cigarette burned down and scorched the bureau. Thoughts just wouldn't fall into any kind of order. Blood—chlorox—swim until you sink. He almost took the note down to the Crumb, but then he didn't. The note wouldn't mean anything to the Crumb. It sure would make a good telling story, though.

In Review

A Letter From Li Po. Conrad Aiken.
New York, Oxford University Press,
1955. \$3.50.

The publication of *A Letter from Li Po* fittingly follows the 1954 appearance of Conrad Aiken's collected poetry. It is after just such a selection of a lifetime of vision and revision that the poet may justly stop to ask: who is the poet, and why do we have poetry? *A Letter from Li Po* is Aiken's question and his answer, a profoundly moving and very beautiful statement about the nature of poetry and the function of the poet.

The question has been posed since Aristotle. In 1919 Aiken turned psychology on poetry in *Scepticisms* and formulated the basic assumption of modern criticism, that poetry is a natural organic product, with discoverable functions, clearly open to analysis. The work of art as it is seen by Aiken and many of our modern critics is now viewed in the light of Freudian insight as a fantasy world, much like that of the dream; a symbolic world, free of the necessities of reality, where the poet and his audience may live out their unacted desires, and resolve conflicts unresolvable in reality. If art does hold a mirror up to nature, it is the mirror through which Perseus views Medusa.

*This 'I,' this moving 'I,' this focal
'I,'*

*which changes, when it dreams the
butterfly,
into the thing it dreams of . . .*

In *A Letter from Li Po* the artist
is fluid;

*how many guises, and disguises, this
nimblest of actors takes, how many
names*

*puts on and off, the costumes worn
but once . . .*

Thus in his art, Aiken can become the great eighth century Chinese poet Li Po, and by employing such an objective correlative for his own experience he carries another dimension into his poem, and is free to see himself as if disguised in a dream. While the first person is ostensibly Aiken himself, speaking of Li Po, he has entitled his poem *A Letter from Li Po*. Li Po can then be seen as the Chinese poet, the symbol of the poet, and as Aiken himself.

*In every part we play, we play our-
selves;
even the secret doubt to which we
come
beneath the changing shapes of self
and thing . . .*

Thus Kenneth Burke suggests that Milton is really speaking of himself in Lycidas, and Gide tells us that he wrote *L'Immoralist* to keep from becoming Michael.

The power of the artist to become his secret self is not the defrauding of the poet by his mind, but Aiken calls it

*the alchemy by which we grow.
It is the self becoming word, the
word
becoming world. And with each
part we play
we add to cosmic Sum and cosmic
sum.
Who knows but one day we shall
find,
bidden in the prism at the rainbow's
foot,
the square root of the eccentric
absolute,
and the concentric absolute to come.*

The work of art is a kind of magic and arises out of the same needs that gave birth to primitive magic. Man has a burden of understanding. He

lives not only in a place but at a time, not only at a time, but in history. He must conceive a law, a pattern of life, and a way of meeting death. He must orient himself because he cannot deal with chaos and the uncanny. This is perhaps the basis of ritual and of art. The primitive does not hope to produce rain in his rain dance, but what he has provided is a means of symbolic action whereby he may have temporary symbolic rain. It is an attempt to 'do something' to control the natural forces, and, as such, brings a temporary solution in the search for gratification and security. Thus our earliest art forms were magical in intent. By symbolically capturing (in painting) and killing the bison, the cave man artist has imposed a form and order upon the universe. This is not art, but magic, and how far removed from such magic is our art.

Taking the psychological notion of the fantasy world as akin to the primitives, mimetic magic, Aiken has given us a vision of the poet's art as a very real magic, rediscovered through our own psychological orientation, yet transcending it. Thus the artist's gift for living in a fantasy world, and becoming his unacted desires is not simply Freud's 'escape from reality' or the defrauding of the self by the mind, but "the alchemy by which we grow." Through this magic we might someday transcend reality and capture the eternal.

The incident of Li Po's tragic death runs throughout Aiken's poem as a kind of allegory of the poet. How fitting that the poet of wine and revel should be drowned one night by leaning too far out over the edge of a boat in a drunken effort to embrace the moon. The incident appears in *A Letter from Li Po* as an image of the artist as the fallen Icarus. The ancients held the notion of the artist and craftsman as somehow dangerous, having man in the seemingly magical power to make and create. Thus Philoctetes could fashion a wonderful bow, but he had the wound, and Icarus could create wings to fly to the sun, but his was a Faustian crime and he must fall. Li Po's Dionysian attempt to embrace the moon (and interestingly, a reflection of the moon) is an extension of the theme of nympholepsy in Aiken's poetry, that pursuit of the unattainable ideal. But in *A Letter from Li Po* Aiken has transformed this message of death in the pursuit of the ever-escaping nymph, to the hope of resurrection. Li Po has not died, but lives in his art, and it is through such art, and the mark it has left upon the things it has touched that the poet may someday find "the concentric absolute to come." Through Li Po, Aiken has died the poet as Shelley died the poet as Keats in *Adonais*.

"What was his light," the poet asks, and answers: "A slant of witch

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light. . . ." The imagery throughout associates the poet with the pagan high priest, or magician. *The Tempest* is just such a vision of the artist as magician or god. The creator of the literary work is the god of his realm; as life is created so is an image of life and the artist is the competitor of God. Shakespeare can create order out of the tempest of life by giving it form in his art. He can overcome despair by naming it, and can even effect a triumph over death. Prospero is Shakespeare's image of the artist as the magician, controlling the universe through the power of his thought. Aiken calls it:

*This powerful mind that can by
thinking take
the order of the world and all
remake . . .*

Aiken's vision of the function of the poet as essentially magical is reflected in the role of Li Po as the poet in the Emperor's court. The court poet is thus called upon to make an occasion immortal. Li Po seen as the wine drinker, transformed by a Dionysian ecstasy, dips his face in lilies in a mystic union with nature, and writes of spring in the Pear Tree Garden. By capturing the moment in the song of Lady Flying Swallow, he has stopped time and made a second eternal.

*Who will forget that afternoon?
Still, still,
the singer holds his phrase, the
rising moon
remains unrisen. Even the fountain
remains unrisen. Even the fountain's
falling blade
hangs in the air unbroken, and says:
Wait!*

The calligrapher Chang Hsu could open the heavens with his brush, and "The timelessness of time takes form in rhyme . . ."

The vision of the poet as a god who creates a universe through his mind is related to that prevalent theme of solipsism in Aiken's poetry.

*The eye
closes, and no other takes its place.
It is the end of god, each time, each
time.*

Even if leaves must fall, and life
does die with change:

*still, in the loving, and the saying
so,
as when we name the hill, and,
with the name,
bestow an essence, and a meaning,
too:*

do we endow them with our lives?

*They move
into another orbit: into a time
not theirs: and we become the bell
to speak
this time . . .*

The poet immortalizes the life he touches, but in the union between 'text and thing' we cannot tell where the most meaning lies. In his union with nature the poet "transposes rocks to rhymes and rhymes to rocks." We cannot know if we climb hills or, "through the words, cadence, and rhyme." And through this strange union with nature the poet, too, is immortalized.

"What can we say but that it never ends." To read Li Po

*is to assume
Li Po himself: as he before assumed
the poets and the sages who were
his.*

*Like him, we too have eaten of the
word:
with him are somewhere lost
beyond the Gorge:
and write, in rain, a letter to lost
children,
a letter long as time and brief as
love.*

The poet's art is his resurrection, and to read him is likened to the taking of the sacrament. We eat of the words, as the body and blood of Christ, and are joined with him in consubstantial union. In the pagan fertility ceremonial and the Eucharistic feast the god must be slain and eaten to give new life to his people, and in the ritual of art the poet gives

us his life as we 'eat' of his words. Aiken has immortalized the artist as that divine god of ancient ritual whose death is but a source of ever-renewing life.

Li Po is Aiken's Adonais. "The breath whose might I have invoked in song Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven . . . Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven, the soul of Adonais, like a star, Beacons from the abode where the eternal are."

Aiken has invoked the power of his objective correlative as the driving spirit of his poem. An additional dimension is brought into *A Letter from Li Po* in the suggestion of incidents in the life of the Chinese poet and by quoting and paraphrasing his poetry. Aiken has long been an admirer of Chinese poetry, and its mark is strongly felt in *A Letter from Li Po* which might almost have been written on mulberry silk. Li Po thought of his poetry as music, and Aiken too is the musician playing upon haunting cadence and rhythm. Like the poetry of Li Po, Aiken's poem is simple, tranquil and controlled, a poem of pastels, with its avoidance of sharp statement and bold forms. Where a kind of vitality is lacking, it is replaced by a smooth and lyrical flow of language and thought, evocative rather than overpowering.

A Letter from Li Po carries with it, through form and subject, the whole tradition of Li Po's poetry, and far beyond that, Aiken's own wonderful art. Here the artist is the magician.

Ellin Horowitz

The Open Mind by J. Robert Oppenheimer. 146 pp. New York: Simon and Schuster. \$2.75.

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey, and once a focal figure in the United States nuclear effort, is grasping for a new context for science among men

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when he writes in this new collection of speeches and essays, that science "has to do with *humanitas*."

At the same time, perhaps inadvertently, he casts the reflection of his own formative wisdom to the world. For his concern with the connection between science and *humanitas*, indeed, Dr. Oppenheimer went on the rack of the U. S. security system in 1954. It is Shakespeare's Richard II who says despairingly, to the last of his faithful: "For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings." But to read Dr. Oppenheimer's speeches and papers, selected from a decade of his effort to add a moral dimension to atomic physics, then to weigh his shameful fate before the executors of the security system, is to invoke new mourners for the death of a new king. He has been debarred from the high councils; when, one is compelled to ask, comes another?

Perhaps we play a false game with history when we allow the nuclear weapons springing from the new physics to color our whole attitude toward its present and future. But this is one instance in which, as occasionally happens, the wills, the energies, the emotions of men must be trained on a Frankenstein's monster.

We see in *The Open Mind* that the physicists, pre-eminently Dr. Oppenheimer, became concerned as no group of scientists ever had before about the monster their intellects had created—and almost from the instant of its birth. "In some sort of crude sense which no vulgarity, no overstatement can quite extinguish," Dr. Oppenheimer says, "the physicists have known sin; and this is a knowledge which they cannot lose."

Plagued by that sense of sin, Dr. Oppenheimer, as early as 1946, had, with other physicists, moved from his laboratory into the world of issues and affairs. The physicists intended to communicate that sense of sin. They meant to lay before their less

knowledgeable fellows the brute implications of the new weapons. They knew that revolutionary ideals must be erected—with crucial seriousness—for man: Ultimate abandonment of war; revocation of the idea that scientific information can be the fee-simple property of any one nation or group of nations; new demand for the open mind in the open society; need for exchange of information and equipment; need, most of all, perhaps, for a sense of balance in policy, looking finally to international control of nuclear weapons.

But the world was slow to heed; and Dr. Oppenheimer's own suspension from security clearance, in the spring of 1954, stands as a bleak monument to the inability of his fellows to grasp the new ideals.

It has become fashionable, among Dr. Oppenheimer's detractors, to picture him as a dream-haunted, unfeeling, impractical cave-dweller who never saw the harsh light of the outer world. It has been in vogue to plead his lack of "horse sense," in the vulgar phrase. *The Open Mind*, read, indeed, with an open mind, spins quite another tale, another picture. We see the dogged stubbornness with which Dr. Oppenheimer held to the real issues as only he could know them. We see his actual hold on the all-inclusive picture. "Horse sense," we detect, was left to puff along to the rear. Thus we find him advocating, before the mid-century decade turned, exchange of information and atomic equipment with allies. The policy makers of the politico-military junta, by contrast, finally came around to exchange in 1954-55. We find Dr. Oppenheimer—in his image of the bottled scorpions—sensing the balance of dread between East and West: This, several years before Dr. Arnold Toynbee, in an article, and Sir Winston Churchill, speaking to Commons, signaled the acceptance of this balance of dread in the popular mind.

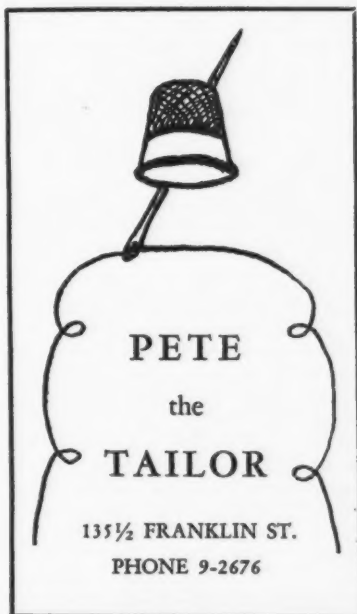
The approach to mankind and its

involvement with the world of science—particularly physics—becomes for Dr. Oppenheimer a question of style. "Style complements affirmation with limitation and humility," he writes, and "it is above all style through which power defers to reason." Dr. Oppenheimer is beyond question a man of style.

The world is more in Dr. Oppenheimer's debt than it realizes, one suspects—as the scientist who, without compromising the integrity of science or its freedom to pursue its ends unhindered, stepped into the breach of affairs to plead the cause of both science and humanity.

The whole business leaves one with the plaintive wish that the nation at large, when Dr. Oppenheimer came to odds with the security system, had been able to muster a bit more style than it did.

—Ed Yoder



Band of Angels: Robert Penn Warren
Random House New York, 1955
\$3.95.

Robert Penn Warren once queried,

To what extent does Faulkner work in terms of polarities, oppositions, paradoxes, inversions of roles? How much does he employ a line of concealed (or open) dialectic progression as a principle for his fiction?

Warren in this passage is describing tools of allegory. Their presence in a narrative signals that the author is intensely concerned with presenting an idea. However relevant these techniques may be to the criticism of Faulkner, they cannot be ignored in an analysis of the fiction of Warren himself.

The strength of Warren's concern in past writings with setting forth ideas may be judged from the philosophical interpolations in *The Ballad of Billie Potts*, from the painfully explanatory pages which conclude *All the King's Men*, from the deviation from historical fact in the last two chapters of *World Enough and Time*, or from Warren's own admission in the "Foreword" to *Brother to Dragons* that the choice of character and incident in that work was governed by "thematic and not by historical considerations." *Band of Angels*, Warren's latest novel, shows a similar preoccupation. Before this can be demonstrated, the plot must be summarized:

The story begins in the 1850's. Amantha Starr, raised as the daughter of a Kentucky planter, discovers at the time of his sudden death that her mother was a slave. Because Amantha has no papers of manumission, she is claimed by a creditor in the settlement of the estate and is sold down the Mississippi. In New Orleans she is bought by a reformed slave trader, Hamish Bond. She considers and rejects suicide, then accepts life as Bond's mistress until New Orleans falls to the Union forces. Shortly thereafter, Amantha marries a Union

captain, Tobias Sears, an Emersonian idealist, who remains in New Orleans with the Freedman's Bureau after the War, attempting to secure suffrage for the Negro. Amantha sees that Tobias's work has more meaning for him than she herself does. She almost deserts Tobias for the Negro Rau-Ru but returns to nurse him when he is injured in a riot. Tobias's efforts in behalf of the Negroes fail, so he and Amantha leave for the West, where they have a series of financial failures and marital difficulties. The story closes with an indication of reconciliation between Amantha and her husband.

In this brutally simplified resume, any reader acquainted with Warren's earlier work will probably first be struck by the flight westward, a device which Warren has repeatedly used to symbolize spiritual debasement. If the reader recalls Warren's poem "Original Sin," the taint in Amantha's birth also becomes meaningful. The reader may note too that the title of the book is a phrase from a familiar song about spiritual deliverance. Here then he has the essential elements for another progress of the pilgrim soul.

All developments in the plot seem to support such an interpretation. Amantha's miscegenetic birth may be read as denoting the strain of evil in man's soul, and her enslavement, as the soul's subjugation to evil in the world order. Amantha's life then becomes an allegory of the soul's attempt to free itself from both burdens. Amantha rejects suicide as succumbing to evil. She breaks her alliance with Hamish Bond because he, seeking to mitigate an evil such as slavery, perpetuates it by making it tolerable. Amantha turns to the idealist Tobias for help, but realizes later that he has accepted her only because to do so flattered his sense of his own nobility. In despair, Amantha attempts to give herself over to evil,

the Negro Rau-Ru, but her instinct for self-preservation forces her to return to accept even a hollow relationship with Tobias. Meanwhile, Tobias has been defeated by the forces of evil, the politicians who blocked Negro advancement, and has learned of his wife's impure birth. He and Amantha begin their move west, symbolic of denial of moral responsibility. Tobias takes to satirizing himself, and he spiritually abandons Amantha, an act signified by his marital infidelity. Amantha puts out of her mind her struggle against evil, forgets her past until the reappearance of Rau-Ru causes her to review her life. She acknowledges that she had committed as well as suffered evil. If her will is free, then she is not the "poor, dear, sweet little Manty . . . to whom all the world had happened, with all its sweet injustice." She can be freed only by herself. Tobias changes too. He sees a wealthy and cultured Negro inventor search for a degraded father he has never seen, in order to (in Tobias's humorous account) "send a chariot of fire, send a band of angels, translate him without death's bitterness direct to Chicago." Meditating this, Tobias apparently realizes that a noble act is not cheapened by the unworthiness of its beneficiary or by its lack of success. In the ensuing reconciliation between Tobias and Amantha, Warren seems to be stating that, although unable to overcome evil in his own nature or in the world, man can make a sensible adjustment to it by accepting moral responsibility and the validity of noble ideals.

So much for Warren's use of "a line of concealed (or open) dialectic progression" in the construction of the narrative of *Band of Angels*. He buttresses the central idea on every side with "polarities, oppositions, paradoxes, inversions of roles." Justice to Warren's inventiveness would require detailed analysis of the techniques, but this review will unjustly concern itself

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instead with measuring Warren's success in adjusting his narrative to the ideas he wished to express. To begin bluntly, the melodramatic tone of many of the scenes, the use of improbable coincidence in the continual reappearance of a character like Rau-Ru, and even crises in the action, such as the reconciliation of Tobias and Amantha, are not required by any law of causality within the narrative itself. They are satisfactorily explained only by reference to the symbolic level of the story. Worse, the philosophical ideas Warren is concerned with often gain no support from what should be a powerful ally, the artistic medium. This failure is most apparent in the quiet last chapter of the novel, which seems an anticlimax to the reader after he has endured enslavement, rape, elopement, a duel, a successful suicide and several attempts, murder, and mob violence. Warren's ideas lose force too in being presented through the mouth of Amantha, a character who hampers his gift for powerful irony. Another structural defect results from Warren's delight in recreating a historical moment. Whether he does this well, as in the fall of New Orleans, or confusingly, as in the collapse of the efforts of the Freedman's Bureau, he diverts the reader's attention from his plot line. The reader regrets the lack of discipline.

This reviewer ought to forfeit tongue and right hand if the criticism above deflects one reader from *Band of Angels*, for in this book Warren shows himself again a master of rhetoric and the invention of satisfyingly improbable characters and scenes—rare skills. No reader will be competent either to condemn or to praise Warren until he has opened *Band of Angels* at least to Hamish Bond's monologue in Chapter Seven and read that awing *tour de force*.

—Daniel W. Patterson

Faulkner As Anthologist

The Big Woods by William Faulkner.
Random House, New York, 1955.
\$3.95.

Faulkner's new collection, *Big Woods*, is composed of four hunting stories, all but one already printed in previous books; four preludes to the stories, three of them stories themselves and all excerpted and considerably altered from previously-published works; and a postlude adapted from a story in *Go Down Moses*, the principal source for the entire collection. One's first reaction after glancing over its pages is to reject the whole of it. But after the careful reading required of all new books by America's greatest living writer of fiction, one's reaction is a seriously-qualified but considerable admiration.

There are many indications that the book was designed to make money: Faulkner has removed the fourth part of one of his best stories, "The Bear," and with it his most difficult prose and a disturbing theme; he has altered the source of the postlude to remove the same theme; he directs the whole to people who hunt or like to read about hunting; the publishers have had the book neatly but not thoughtfully illustrated; and they have published it in time for the Christmas trade. But Faulkner, notwithstanding his money-making trips to Hollywood and his magazine publications, has never prostituted his awesome art in a novel or collection of stories between covers. Anyone who doubts this should consider the few concessions in style and diction he makes to his readers and should read his seemingly tough and cynical Preface to the Modern Library edition of *Sanctuary*. There he tells how he selected the most sensational subject he could think of and wrote it into *Sanctuary* to make money; but he goes on to say that after he saw how "terrible" it was in the galley proofs, he tore them down at his own expense and rewrote

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it so that it would not "shame" *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury*. And it does not.

Faulkner assembles and adapts his stories with an artistry one would expect from the author who shaped the delicate complexities of *Absalom, Absalom!*. The collection achieves a fine unity. It has the single topic of hunting; it deals with a single theme, the passing of the wilderness; and it involves the same characters—Ike McCaslin, his kinsmen, his friends, and the Indians or the "People" as Faulkner calls them. The collection has an effective time-progression, beginning with Chickasaw Indians viewing French explorers on the Mississippi in the first prelude and then "The Bear" in which Ike McCaslin is baptised fully into manhood at the age of fourteen in 1881, and ending with an account of the same character made for this printing to be over eighty in the late 1940's. Finally, each prelude admirably sets the tone for the following story: the prelude for "The Old People" is appropriately wild and tense, and that for the humorous "A Bear Hunt" is wryly funny.

If, as is probable, a lot of hunters and readers of male adventure-magazine fiction discover Faulkner for the first time this Christmas through this book, its publication is justified without further question. They will experience him with a serious and characteristic theme, with his remarkable story-telling ability, with his flexible and effective and difficult style, with a wealth of recurring and blood-related characters, with his inventive and experimental structures and viewpoints, and with two qualities we associate with Twain: a skill with local speech patterns and an ability to communicate the dry and ironic humor of the folk tale. "A Bear Hunt" is one of a half-dozen funniest stories in American literature. It is conceivable that this book may

help to persuade that distressingly large group of people who think Faulkner is a cynical and despairing realist of the now-outmoded school, people who have this opinion through a reading of *Sanctuary* alone—and necessarily a careless reading—that Faulkner is a deep and warm romantic idealist.

But while feeling happy for those who will experience Faulkner for the first time, or nearly the first time, through this book, those old lovers of this man's works must lament (painfully and humbly it must be said) his lack of judgment in separating the two great themes, both resulting from man's cupidity and misuse of property: the passing of the wilderness and the sin against the Negro. In removing the latter from this book, a theme bound to the other in its principal source with profound and moving art, Faulkner has made this work less complex and disturbing for hunters, but also less significant for serious students of American literature. "The Bear" is incomplete without the fourth section. What McCaslin did there is a direct result of what he learned by hunting the bear in the first parts, and the killing of the bear lacks a deep meaning without one's experiencing the consequences of it. And the postlude, without the theme of the white man's sin against the Negro with its continuing, terrible consequences, carries the same message, with some overtones certainly, as would a government circular on forest conservation. We can hope that Faulkner's audience may grow. But we can also hope that "The Bear" and "Delta Autumn" do not go down to posterity in these forms.

—John C. Weston, Jr.

In Profile

CONRAD AIKEN makes his initial appearance in the *Quarterly* with "Vaudeville Suite;" written in 1916, the cycle is the last unpublished work from Mr. Aiken's so-called "period of the Symphonies." Mr. Aiken's latest volume of verse is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

JEAN ARMSTRONG, currently completing work on a Master's Degree in English at the University of North Carolina, is a native of Tappan, N. Y. Miss Armstrong is published here for the first time.

JACK CRAWFORD, JR. is a resident of Kingston, N. Y. He has published previously in *Prairie Schooner*, *The New Orleans Poetry Journal* and other reviews.

GEORGE GARRETT is a graduate student at Princeton University; under the sponsorship of Marianne Moore, he has given readings of his poetry at the Museum of Modern Art.

DON GEIGER is assistant professor of speech at the University of California in Berkeley. He has published poetry in *Perspectives*, *Poetry*, *Interim*, *Shenandoah* and others.

JOHN MAHONEY is engaged in graduate work in Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina; he has published in numerous journals and had one verse play produced on stage.

ALEXANDER BLACKBURN recently completed requirements for his Master's Degree in English at the University of North Carolina, and is currently teaching at a private school in New York. He is published here for the first time.

CHARLEEN WHISNANT teaches English at North Carolina State College in Raleigh. Mrs. Whisnant has published previously in the *Carolina Quarterly*. She is a friend and protege of Ezra Pound.

DORIS BETTS, whose book, *THE GENTLE INSURRECTION*, won the 1953 Putnam Award, appears for the second time in the *Quarterly*; her

latest story appears in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*.

JOAN MAUNEY is a resident of Shelby, North Carolina; "The Coldest Winter" is her initial appearance in the *Quarterly*.

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COVER DESIGN BY MURRAY WHISNANT

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THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY is published three times annually at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Subscription Rates are \$1.25 per year. Foreign Subscriptions are \$1.75 per year. The CAROLINA QUARTERLY is distributed by Selected Outlets, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, N. J. Printed and bound by Colonial Press, Inc., Chapel Hill, N. C.

THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and belles-lettres. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

the CAROLINA QUARTERLY

Winter-Spring

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Cry in The Wilderness

By DEAN CADLE

The mining camp of Mingo was being cleaned up, washed in the blood, and set in the narrow way. Already over twenty new souls had been brought into the fold and twelve backsliders rescued. Four men from the Boarding House had been converted, and now Albert Flowers, with whom the Lord had been a three-time loser, had been at the mourners' bench the past two nights. Then on Sunday morning at the Boarding House when Mrs. Harrison went into the dining room to set the breakfast table she found her tablecloth finger-smearred with soot, the printed letters misshapenly scrawled across it: WAKE ME FOR CHURCH. BIRDIE.

In the room upstairs Mrs. Harrison found Birdie Walker fast asleep in the double bed in which on Sundays he usually remained until noon; and beside the bed, as usual, was his bottle. His pillow was on the floor, and to keep out the light he had slipped the pillowcase over his head. He was rolled up so tightly in the piece-quilt that the complete shape of his beer stomach, rising and falling like a bellows, was discernible. Half of his right leg lay exposed below the quilt, and he had ripped the sheet with his pegleg.

"Birdie." No answer. "Birdie." Not a grunt. "Birdie, did you want to go to church?"

"What!" He sat up, his head shrouded in the pillowcase. "What!"

When she left the room Birdie unwrapped himself, slipped off the pillowcase, and brushed off the feathers. With his eyes closed he sat holding his head between his hands, and with a cool breeze from the raised window touching his body he grew aware of the Sunday morning: the creak of the pump handle in the alley, the slam of a screen door, and the voices of children. For the first time since the beginning of the revival Birdie was pleased with himself, for at last he had a plan. It had come to him last night while he sat at a bar in town, and when he revealed it to Alice Rowe while riding up the hollow on the bus she had agreed to help him. Although he couldn't recall all the details this morning he knew it was a sure-fire plan.

Birdie put on his black patent leather shoe, a white shirt and his blue serge pants, and glancing into the wall mirror he brushed back his thin graying hair. He didn't feel like matching his face with all the pious ones at the breakfast table, so he lay on the bed and

read a Wild West Weekly magazine until he heard the men leaving the table. Then he pulled up his pants leg, slipped the halfpint into a leather holster on the inside of his pegleg, and went down to eat.

The camp was deserted when he came into the front yard and leaned against the gate to finish his cigar. He closed his eyes for a moment against the warmth of the sun. With the trees in full leaf the mountain sides seemed to have moved in closer about the camp, and the odors of wild flowers and of fruit tree blossoms were like the fragrance of many perfumes sprinkled from the mountain tops on the warm breezes.

Birdie was listening to the singing from the church and to the hallelujah shouts to Glory when he saw George and Wint Parker, barefoot and dressed in faded overalls, coming down the alley, each carrying a gallon lard bucket of milk.

"You know what we heard, Birdie?" Wint asked.

"You two are liable to hear anything."

"You slept with your leg again."

"You fool with me this morning, Boy, and I'll wash your face with buttermilk."

"Mr. Flowers was up at the house this morning and said you kicked him all night long."

Birdie lifted the gate latch. They ran, Wint chanting, "Birdie slept with his le-eg, Birdie slept with his le-eg."

Birdie crossed the swinging bridge and after climbing the hill path to the church stood outside in the pattern of sun and beech-tree shade peeping in. The mourners' benches were filled but all the Christians were gathered at one end near the organ, and when one leaped up to shout, breaking a path away from the center, Birdie saw that it was Albert Flowers they were working on.

Elmer Sizemore stood on the platform with a Bible in his hand, waving his arms and preaching. His straw-brown hair, growing down to his ears, was slicked back from his forehead, and a long strand kept falling forward as his head bobbed in accentuation of the flow of his words. Birdie noted that he remained on one end of the platform, keeping the side of his head in a dusty ray of sunlight slanting through a lowered window.

"I come up from the South," he was saying, "and spent days wandering through the hills, and finally I stood there on top that mountain yonder looking down on this quiet village and knowed I'd found a home. It seemed then that the spirit of the Lord was with me, saying, Abide here and preach of Me. And oh, my Brothers and Sisters, I felt then as old John the Baptist must have felt as he preached in the wilderness of Judea, living on wild honey and locusts, saying repent ye, repent ye. Oh, my sinner friends, repent and come to the Lord, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Wint Parker came running lightly as a rabbit up the hill with a piece of paper in his hand and, stopping beside Birdie, said, "They'll make you go to the mourners' bench."

"What you got there, Wint?"

"Letter for Mr. Miller."

"Who from?"

"That woman on the hill. I took her milk and she gave me fifty cents to bring this."

"Take it on in, then," Birdie said. This was all he wanted to know, that the coming of daylight had not given Alice Rowe cold feet. This was a fine beginning. Elmer Sizemore was preaching his last sermon.

Wint Parker walked up the aisle to the platform where Brother Miller, the pastor, stood leading the singing, and handed him the paper. When the song was ended Brother Miller waved the paper to the audience and exclaimed, "Amen! Amen! Brothers and Sisters, if there's ever been a minute that any of you doubted the presence of the Lord in the camp, I want to read you this message. I feel in my soul it's come from the Lord. The message says: 'Mr. Miller, will you and the whole church come to my house after the service this morning? I hope you will for I need to see you.' It is signed by Alice Rowe."

The shifting of bodies stopped and all prayers died on the lips. The only noise on the hillside was the song of a bluebird in a maple, bridging the moment of silence. Then, like a breeze, whispering sprang up in the house. The Christians rose from their knees and stood exchanging triumphant glances. Albert Flowers raised his head and took a look around.

"The flesh is a weak and a terrible thing, my friends," Brother Miller said. "It's the food of the devil. But remember, the spirit of the Lord can break up this feast and wash whiter than snow the soul tainted black by the fingers of the devil. No matter what you may have thought of Sister Rowe up till now, it's the duty of every Christian in this camp to go into her home and pray for her, for I feel that the hand of the Lord has wrote this message."

The audience, led by Elmer Sizemore and Brother Miller, came out the door singing, "We will meet you in the morning," filed across the swinging bridge, went down the alley and climbed the weed-grown hill to Alice Rowe's house, singing all the way.

"Do you think she's going to get right, Birdie?" Albert Flowers asked.

"I don't doubt it. Everybody else is."

"You know what it'll mean, don't you, Birdie?"

"Well, Albert, she's had a little of everything else, so I guess a little religion won't hurt her."

"But she'll confess and tell everything she knows."

"Sounds bad, all right, Albert. A man's reputation won't be worth a handful of doodle dust."

Albert Flowers turned and retreated up the alley, and was followed by at least a dozen men, five of whom were awaiting baptism.

Still singing, Elmer Sizemore and Brother Miller went up the steps and entered the house. After them went the deacons and then the others. The porch was filled and the crowd completely surrounded the house. The singing went right on, and when someone began shouting on the porch a man was shoved backward and stepped off into a barrel of rain water. "Amen!" he said.

Birdie turned the barrel upside down and, climbing upon it, lifted himself onto the window sill, from where he had a view into the room.

"I think I've had a vision, Mr. Miller," Alice Rowe was saying.

Birdie got a glimpse of her sitting up in bed, dressed in a white night gown. Her hair was pulled from behind and piled on top of her head, the way she always wore it, and there was a roll of blonde bangs on her forehead. There was make-up on her face, but the excessive lipstick failed to give her lower lip the apparently hoped-for fullness. Brother Miller was on his knees beside the bed.

"A vision, Sister Rowe?" he asked. "What kind of a vision?"

"It told me I'm going to have a child."

Brother Miller got up from his knees and glanced at the faces around him. Elmer Sizemore moved away from the bed and stood against the wall.

The bedside conversation was being relayed through the doorway, down the steps, and into the yard.

"A vision, my foot!" someone said.

"It's a new one on me too."

"Guess we'll have to try a vision next time, Charlotte."

"What else did the vision tell you, Sister Rowe?" Brother Miller asked.

"It said that my son is to be blessed by the Lord and that he will grow up to be a preacher."

"Look!" someone on the steps exclaimed. "Blood on the porch post!"

"Oh, that?" Alice Rowe said when a whispered account of the discovery reached Brother Miller. "The vision told me to do it. It's because my son is chosen by the Lord. The vision said the Lord is tired of the way people handle their religion."

"Why, what do you mean, Sister Rowe?"

"It's what the vision said. The vision said that there is too much whooping and jabbering in the church and not enough worshipping."

"Are you sure it said that, Sister Rowe?"

"Them are the very words. And it said that many people are being scared into religion by false prophets, and that's why there's so many backsliders, so many people hanging between heaven and hell not knowing what to do, and so they just sit around waiting for Judgment Day."

Birdie couldn't remember telling her that, but he decided it was a good touch, the very thing he would have said if he had been having the vision. She was doing fine. Mighty fine. Birdie took out a cigar and lit it.

"Brother Sizemore," Brother Miller called, looking around the room, "would you like to talk with Sister Rowe?"

"He stepped out for a minute," someone said.

Brother Miller turned back to the bed and stood for a moment thinking.

"Uh—Sister Rowe," he continued, "did the vision say anything about—uh—how you come to have the child?"

Alice Rowe had her eyes fixed on the foot railing of the bed and stared in a fashion of enchantment, looking at no one.

"You mean virgin birth?" she asked calmly.

Smothered giggles begun cautiously in the room traveled to the yard and rushed back as laughter. Brother Miller ran his finger around inside his shirt collar.

"Well—something like that; or—"

"Oh yes," she answered quickly.

Brother Miller pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead. It was clearly written on his face that he realized he was without doubt the first man in nearly two thousand years to be confronted with a manifestation of such singular nature. Then, taking his time, he carefully folded the handkerchief into a neat square and slowly replaced it in his hip pocket.

"He stood right on the foot of the bed," Alice Rowe continued, "and told me just what I've said. He was all bright and shiny and beautiful—"

"He who, Sister Rowe?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. It was Gabriel in the vision, you know. And just before he left he told me the name of the real father."

"The real father?" Brother Miller asked. "But I thought you said—" Then he stopped.

"Oh," she said, "it has to have a real father too, you know. And Gabriel said Mr. Sizemore is the real father."

Birdie, watching the people in the yard for their reaction, heard gasps from several women and saw surprise move across many faces.

"So this is where he goes for his evening prayers?" came a man's voice from beside a papaw bush.

"Just like I told you, Martha, I ain't been sold on him a minute," Henry Courtney said to his wife.

Dorothy Farmer, the young girl who had kissed Elmer Sizemore's hand the night of her conversion, began crying quietly, then turned and fled down the green hill.

When Brother Miller came out the front door and the people began dispersing, mumbling to each other their hurt that a faith as abundant as theirs should be made the toy of a trifling pretender, Birdie climbed down from the window and went to the foot of the hill where he met Uncle Jake Carroll.

"What do you make of it, Birdie?"

"Looks like she took care of the preacher, all right," Birdie said.

"I mean the vision business."

"You don't believe there's any sort of truth in that, do you?"

"Of course not. Nobody else does either. But what's her idea?"

"Well," Birdie said, searching for an answer. "Maybe the preacher's done her dirt, and this is her way of squaring things up."

"Might be," Uncle Jake said. "If it's so, then he's fooled a mighty lot of people during the month he's been here."

"Well," Birdie said, "I ain't believed him none of the time. And I guess about all he can do is pull out, now that she's showed him up. Don't you think so?"

"Yeah, it appears that way. Well, come have dinner with us, Birdie."

"No, guess I'll go home, Jake, and catch up on my sleep," Birdie said, highly pleased that Elmer Sizemore would soon shake the dust of the camp from his feet and that by next week Alice Rowe's "vision" would be laughed into mountain legendry.

But a wind blew from heaven while Birdie lay snoring upstairs. He awoke late in the afternoon, took a sip from his bottle, holstered it, and went into the alley. The air rang loudly with the joy of worshipping voices. On a slope above Alice Rowe's house, in the sun just beyond the line of twilight crawling toward them, Birdie saw the flash of colors as worshippers shifted about under the trees. The chants of repentance and the rhythm of singing voices swept down to him, and there was shouting on the hillside among the stones and papaw bushes.

Alice Rowe was sitting on the porch of her house, with her chin resting on her arms folded on the porch railing. She was dressed in white.

At the pump Birdie came upon Wint Parker filling two lard buckets.

"What's going on up there, Wint?"

"They're saving everybody, Birdie. You going up?"

"Nope, don't think so."

"Mr. Flowers just got saved."

"I was afraid of that. Another good poker hand shot to hell. Is Elmer Sizemore up there?"

"Oh sure. He's the one that called the meeting. They're praying for Alice Rowe. She must be going to have some kind of baby, or something. Mr. Sizemore says it's the work of the Lord. And I guess it must be, for everybody's praying for her."

Birdie swore, nervously shifting his wooden leg.

"I've made a dollar," Wint said, picking up his buckets.

"Doing what?"

"Carrying water. They took up a collection for me."

"Wouldn't like to try your hand in a little game of poker, would you?"

"No, but I can skin you at checkers."

When the first song from the church came to him that evening Birdie was sitting in a cane-bottomed chair in the yard behind the Boarding House. With the chair leaned against an apple tree he sat absent-mindedly chewing on a dead cigar.

"Your move, Birdie."

Birdie reached over and moved one of the red checkers. Then he struck a match and was relighting his cigar when he saw Alice Rowe, in a simple white dress, appear at the corner of the house.

"Wint, how about you running to the pump and getting us a cold drink?"

Alice Rowe came over and sat down in Wint's chair.

"Guess it backfired on us, didn't it?" Birdie said.

"I hate now I got mixed up in it," she said.

"You did a good job, though."

He turned in his chair and for a moment sat staring at her, for her appearance was strangely changed. He decided it was mostly in her hair, which was now parted in the center, with the roll of bangs gone, and combed down smoothly over her ears and neck. Also, the make-up was washed from her face, exposing the pores of her skin and a natural pinkness in her small lips.

"In fact," he added, "I guess we did too good a job. But did I tell you all that vision stuff?"

"Don't you remember?"

"Well, not everything. I guess I was a little high, you know."

"If you don't remember what you told me, then maybe it's all a lie about him."

"Oh no, don't worry about that. I was married to his mother, all right. He was six years old when we got married, and he's been in some sort of trouble ever since."

"I've been worrying about it all day, thinking maybe he really is a preacher."

"Well, he ain't. And he come here because he beat up a paper man who was down there writing up the colored question. Here's the letter from his mother."

"No, I believe you. But if you wanted to get rid of him why didn't you just tell everybody about him?"

"Aw, his mother asked me not to, for that mighta meant he'd been arrested. And besides, they wouldn't believe me now if I did tell them. They'd just say it was the work of the devil."

"There's one thing you didn't tell me, though. About the blood on the porch post."

"Oh, that was something I thought about later. When I come in last night there was this old hen setten in the tree out in the front yard. That gave me the idea. I thought it would be a good touch, so I slipped up after you got in bed."

Alice Rowe leaned across the checker board and handed Birdie a roll of paper bills. "I couldn't keep it," she said. "And I'm going over to the church and tell them it was all just a dream."

"Yeah," Birdie said. "I been settin here trying to think up what to do next. I was so dang sure our plan would make him haul outa here. And it almost worked too."

"I wish I hadn't got mixed up in it," she said, and stood up to go to the church. "It's been bothering me all day."

"But even if it didn't work it was a pretty good idea," Birdie chuckled, and then he began laughing. But when Alice Rowe remained standing beside the chair, making no departing gesture, and did not speak, Birdie looked up at her.

She stood with her hand on the chair back, not looking at Birdie, and after what seemed several minutes she spoke. "It was a most wonderful idea." She stood motionless, her face lifted, staring up into the new-flowered pinkness of the apple tree. Then trance-like and without speaking, with her head still lifted and with her arms folded on her breasts, she walked toward the alley, at the corner of the house passing Wint, who to announce his coming was singing "Got That Old Time Religion."

"She looks sick," he said, handing Birdie a bucket of cold water. "Is it the baby?"

"No. She decided agin it. She's going to get religion instead."

"They're working on you too, Birdie. I could hear them praying your name, calling you a one-legged sinner that don't know the difference between pump water and booze. I pray it don't take."

Birdie rinsed the cigar taste from his mouth, and, aiming at a tomato plant, spurted a long stream of water with a why at the end.

"Mom says it'll be the Lord's last work, and'll be the end of the world when you get religion."

Constancy

Bonfire sparks like whirling gnats
rise with a dying fire,
and spiralling higher
spun by wind to crumbling dust

above the flame and ecstasy
of youthful hearts and eyes,
sparks die like love,

cold ashes stay.

But this is not
a sentimental binge.

Love has its sexual tinge
but gets along.

Bright sparks that cool in winds of night
fall into niches left for things
like Caesar's horse or Alexandria's light
Flame, ecstasy, and burning gnats,
the gold of Croesus, all the things that be
unloved by cynic weavers go.

What remains the constant lovers know.

JAMES BINNEY

Winter

(Translated from the Black Book of Carmarthen)

Sharp wind, sharp hill,
Hard is it in seizing shelter:
The ford fouling, the lake freezing,
A man stands on a single stalk.

Wave over wave covers the landside,
Very high, worst on the chest of the hillfort:
Now scarcely is he able to stand.

A cold place, the lake, in front of this stormy
Winter; withered the grass, cut are its stalks,
Battlesome breeze, woods in a worry.

A cold bed of fish in the ice sheet's
Shadow, the stag thinning, grass hoar-bearding,
The day falling brief, the wood bending.

Snow snowing, white its skin,
No warrior ever held now to working:
Cold the lakes, their color is heatless.

Snow snowing, white the hoarfrost,
Idle shield on old shoulders;
Fierce the wind, freezing are the buds.

Snow snowing, over the icetop,
The wind whisks the crown of the wood;
Strong shield on brave shoulders.

Snow snowing, blankets the roadway,
Speed on my warriors to battle
Without me, my wound now forbids me.

Snow snowing, over the slopeside,
Horses now housed, even cattle are thinning;
No nature is this of a summer's day.

Snow snowing, its border goes wide now,
The bare spar of a ship at sea;
Now does the coward crawl out with advising.

JOHN MAHONEY

Tragedy and Freedom

By WILLIAM H. POTEAT

The subject of tragedy has evoked such a luxuriant literature—both dramatic and critical—that it would be absurd to suppose that its essence could be reduced to a few simple propositions. Nor is it less absurd to suppose in advance that there is something which we must call *the tragic as such* for all time—without reckoning with the shifting currents of thought and the dynamic equipoise which comprise the sociological and intellectual context for the production of literary works which we would be willing to call tragedies. I make no such pretensions here.

Nevertheless, the very fact that many different works of literature, with quite different sets of philosophical presuppositions—cosmological, anthropological, ethical—are called tragedies requires that an attempt at locating some of the essentials be made, however tentative. Perhaps what is to follow is only slightly less simple-minded itself, but surely it can be agreed that to define the tragic situation as one in which is exhibited the greatness and wretchedness of man is altogether too general. For whatever is gained in pith is lost in silence on such matters as: what is man's greatness? What is his wretchedness? How are they related? How are they assimilated to a dramatic cosmology? What is the character of the cosmos in which these are synthesized? Or—if they are left unresolved—what sense can be made of man who is both great and wretched? But then, of course, as soon as one has begun to give specific content to the empty concept of tragedy by answering these questions, he is setting forth the particular intellectual commitments of a particular tragedian—and of his age—instead of dealing with the tragic as such.

However this may be, the limited objective which I entertain here has to do with a very general framework of analysis, which, it has seemed to me, has received insufficient attention: I mean the shift from ancient to Christian and from Christian to post-Christian presuppositions, and the consequences of this for the notion of the tragic.

That Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dostoyevski and Sartre have all concerned themselves dramatically with the greatness and wretchedness of man is beyond question. That their "worlds" are profoundly different is equally so. When we fix our attention upon such differences (perforce in very broad terms in this context) how are the essential problems of tragedy and freedom illuminated?

Certainly not because it is required, independently of all commitments as to what really is the greatness and wretchedness of man, or even necessarily by an empirical generalization as to what is held to be the case, but only for the sake of the problem I wish to bring out, I should like to take Greek tragedy to be the very paradigm of the tragic as such. And so doing, I want to consider: (1) the conditions of the possibility of tragedy; (2) the nature of tragedy; and (3) some differences between a literature produced on the presuppositions of classical thought and that produced within the context of Christian. To reduce the whole question to hopelessly simple terms: what difference does the Incarnation make to our understanding of tragedy and freedom?

I

Manifestly, the conditions of the possibility of the tragic situation as exhibiting the greatness and the wretchedness of man are at bottom the same as those for there being man at all. If tragedy deals with the contradictions of human existence, we must briefly consider the existential root of these contradictions. How can man be in contradiction? The short answer can be found in Pascal's: "Man infinitely transcends man"—which is to say, he is forever outside himself looking in. He is a being who, as subject, stands over against the "other" as object; a self, confronted by a not-self—a victim of what Hegel called the "unhappy consciousness."

Or—to use the Sartrean metaphor—man's consciousness has a vent in it, a certain fault, a scar, a possibility, a gap, freedom, nothing; with the result that he is a being who is *for-himself*, i.e., stands, as subject over against himself as object, always meeting himself coming from the other direction, as it were. This being so, man "is what he is not and is not what he is." We are always spectators of ourselves: the spectator always takes up an attitude towards the self it sees, whether it be cynical, comic, pathetic, ironic or tragic.

Kierkegaard saw this "unhappy consciousness," which is the condition of the human as such, as being rooted in dread, i.e., the *sympathetic antipathy* and *antipathetic sympathy* before the possibility of the possibility of freedom.

Rilke has also expressed it in his Eighth Duino Elegy:

We've never, no, not for a single day,
Pure space before us, such as that which flowers
endlessly open into: always world,
and never nowhere without no:

.

That's what Destiny means: being opposite,
and nothing else, and always opposite.

.

And we, spectators always everywhere,
looking at, never out of, everything!
It fills us. We arrange it. It decays.
We re-arrange it, and decay ourselves.

.....
We live our lives, forever taking leave.¹

I should not want to suggest by the apparent neutrality with which I employ these different analogies that it is a matter of indifference which of them we finally use, or that they all come to precisely the same thing in the end. On the contrary, it is my point that the way in which this "unhappy consciousness" is imaged is the crucial determinant of how one conceives being human and what therefore is the tragic situation, i.e., wherein consists the greatness and wretchedness of man. My present purpose however requires only that the conditions of the possibility of human existence be exhibited. It is precisely in the "metaphysical space" thus described that human existence as such comes into being. It is here that the contradictions of existence arise. It is because of this "space" that man transcends himself; takes himself upon himself; asks questions about himself and about all that is not himself, and about the relation between himself and the other. It is here that man becomes a problem for himself. Because of this man is confronted by guilt, fate and death: guilt seems to call in question responsibility (if to act at all is to become guilty, how can I really be responsible?); fate seems to call in question the reality of self-determination; death seems to call in question the meaning of life.

What then is meant by the contradictions of existence which, it is supposed, arise within this unhappy consciousness? Clearly, these are not logical contradictions, in the familiar sense. It is rather a case of antithetic ends, a radical conflict in the values exhibited by and pursued within man's world, the appearance of axiological cross-purposes in the structures of existence.

One need not canvass the entire field to make the matter clear. Man aspires to values. He falls short. He wants what he cannot have. But is this not puzzling—that he should want what he cannot have? Man is a failure. He, in a sense, always fails. It is almost true to say that man fails by definition. Yet how can this be? What kind of a universe is this such that we fail by definition? How can we believe that these are not axiological cross-purposes: to strive absolutely and yet to fail. And is it not odd that man should suffer, not merely because he fails to achieve his goal, but chiefly because he did not meet requirements which he has placed upon himself or appropriated as his own.

¹ Translated by J. B. Leishman and Stephen Spender, W. W. Norton and Company, pp. 67, 60

Not only, however, do man's aspirations outstrip his powers, with the result that he suffers guilt; he pursues values and frustrates himself. He pursues values and has an ambivalent will. He seeks the good and finds that to achieve it he must destroy good. He aspires to ethical ends and "loses control": his acts, even his will, fall under an alien power.

Man seems to desire the truth above all else. No man willingly and consciously lives a life of illusion. Yet we seem deliberately to deceive ourselves: we lie to others and to ourselves, not merely unconsciously but consciously. Yet this consciousness is a reproach to us, so we convince ourselves we are not lying, thus lying to ourselves on a yet deeper level.

Man is full of theories as to what the meaning of life is, feeling that it has some clear purpose for him. At the same time it all seems to be called in question by another persistent feeling: that suffering and death make it all a tale told by an idiot.

But this is of course not all. Man not only feels these particular contradictions for what they are. He feels there is a second order level of contradiction: a contradiction between this contradictory reality in which he finds himself involved and his feeling that it ought not to be so. Axiological cross-purposes of an ultimate sort are exhibited even, or especially, in the fact that man feels incensed over axiological cross-purposes. As Gabriel Marcel observes: "My life. The fact that it can seem to me to be literally devoid of meaning is an integral part of its structure. It then appears to me as pure accident . . . It (the I) is irresistibly driven to self-negation . . . No doubt this thorough-going nihilism is just an extreme position, a position very difficult to hold and implying a kind of heroism. But here we are deep in contradictions, since this heroism, if it is experienced and recognized as such, immediately reestablishes the subject, and at the same time restores to existence the meaning that was denied to it; it does at least in fact exhibit one value; it serves as a springboard for the Consciousness which denies it."²

But again, Pascal has said the last word on this subject: "What a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy! Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth; depository of truth, a sink of uncertainty and error; the pride and refuse of the universe!"³

II

All of the contradictions of human existence are not on the same level. We may—recognizing the dangers of any simple schematism—distinguish between penultimate and ultimate contra-

² *Being and Having* (translated by K. Farrer), Beacon Press, p. 92.

³ *Pensees*, frag. 434.

dictions. Whether a contradiction is ultimate or penultimate will of course be determined by the system of thought in which it appears. It may be that what one would call a penultimate contradiction points finally to an ultimate one. It is certainly true that such a connection will be seen or not depending upon the degree of seriousness with which existence is contemplated. But all of this is eccentric to our immediate problem. The axiological cross-purposes exhibited by existence evoke different attitudes: pathos, comedy, irony and tragedy. I want to suggest in what follows that Greek thought—even Greek metaphysics—is essentially tragic; and that by contrast, the world view produced by the doctrine of the Incarnate Word is ironic, i.e., the axiological cross-purposes in existence are overcome by faith!

The first basic presupposition of tragedy, as I shall be using the concept, is that the axiological cross-purposes involved are serious and ultimate. They are serious in that ironic and comic detachment are not sufficient to achieve a resolution of the conflict. They are ultimate insofar as values standing at the very top of our hierarchy are in contradiction. They are both serious and ultimate because man's highest values of personal existence or as a self-autonomy, freedom, responsibility—are in collision with something commensurate in dignity with man's freedom, which calls these into question. This is a conflict in the structure of reality as such, hence it is ultimate.

The second presupposition of tragedy is that the hero becomes involved in the axiological cross-purposes of existence, and therefore becomes guilty, e.g., the destroyer of values, or an aspirer who fails, by becoming responsible, that is by being or becoming human: an act which is not quite an act, in the ordinary sense, because it is not the product of a choice in the ordinary sense. The hero discovers that becoming responsible and being guilty are correlative facts. He takes himself upon himself. This expresses his primal freedom, his power to speak for himself. But it also is the "act" by which he becomes guilty, is caught up in the conflict of values. Nevertheless his involvement in the axiological cross-purposes through the "act" of becoming responsible, that is, human, is the occasion both of suffering and the opportunity to exhibit greatness *in* suffering.

From this it is possible to see that a typical subject-matter of tragedy is a conflict within what we commonly call the ethical life: the act of choosing evil for the sake of good; of being forced to choose between evils, and so on. The hero is caught in a situation where he must consciously "speak for himself," take himself upon himself, become responsible, hence guilty because he is the agent of the destruction of values. Yet, antecedent to his act of becoming guilty as involved in some destruction of values, he is "guilty" of

being human, i.e., being involved in the axiological cross-purposes of existence as man. That is, he becomes entangled in the problem of making a particular ambiguous choice in the first place, only because antecedently he has made the "choice" (which is not a choice on logical all-fours with the subsequent ones) to be human.

If we take the ancestral curse in the *Oresteia* to be the symbol of a "given" guilt, we can understand the problem. The blood-feud presents no conflict in values until a responsible hero appears on the scene. Orestes only becomes an *ethical*, which is to say, *tragic*, rather than *pathetic* sufferer, through his "decision" to speak for himself, to become human. To put it differently, only when he becomes aware of the ancestral curse, asks questions about it, takes it upon himself as a self-centered being does he become, as it were, *subjectively guilty*. He "exercises" his primal freedom to become a self and thereby affirms a value; yet this very "act" precipitates him into the axiological cross-purposes of existence, throwing into question the *ultimate* value and meaning of his act of self-transcendence.

Or—to put it still another way—the ambiguity of values in the realm of the ethical, the necessity of destroying values through choice within the ethical, and the suffering that he must bear because of the guilt thus incurred is thrust upon the tragic hero because *anterior to all this he had made another "choice"—he had become a self.*

Before proceeding an important *caveat* must be introduced. It is precisely the absence in Greek thought of a grasp of the meaning of choice and full personal existence and responsibility as it comes later to be understood through the Biblical category of the I-Thou relation, that makes illicit the use of 'choice' to refer to the circumstance occasioning the coming into being of the hero. The classical tragic hero is born, not made, and certainly not made by any act of personal choice. To become a self, in these terms, is the result of a "fall," in which the hero is passive. In Christian thought, one becomes a self through the responsive, responsible-making *act* of hearing God's word.

Tragedy then, as I have been using the concept, involves an affirmation and a negation—or at any rate, a doubt which is left unresolved: an affirmation of the greatness of man who takes himself upon himself; a doubt as to whether the nature of reality will succour such greatness—the greatness of personal existence. Thus we see that tragedy ends in a kind of mystification. For, if the hero becomes involved in the contradictions of existence through the "act" of becoming human; if being human is precisely being heroic; and yet, if becoming human is to become guilty and suffer the punishment which involvement in responsible existence entails; and

especially if the hero is born and not made human, least of all by an act of "choice" in any satisfactory sense; then suffering and death cast doubt upon the ultimate meaningfulness of responsible existence. Even so, the plain fact is that the act of "accepting" responsible existence and exhibiting the power to bear suffering with courage are affirmations by the hero of value, and function as such for all in the audience who identify with him. Yet, it is an affirmation in the face of a serious threat, the doubt cast by suffering and death upon the meaningfulness of that personal existence which is the presupposition of responsibility and courage. If, therefore, it is to be the affirmation of a real rather than an illusory value, it will have to take place in a total frame of meaning large enough to assimilate—one might even say, synthesize—both personal existence and suffering and death: which is to say, larger than the framework of tragedy. Tragedy, therefore, points to a structure of meaning beyond itself, by putting itself under a terrible strain. But it remains silent as to what this structure is, and in so doing, in resting in an ultimate *scepsis*, it affirms, paradoxically, the value of responsible human existence at a still higher level.

In other words, there seems to be an "ontological" conflict between the best and highest in human nature and the "reality" which is the "stage" upon which man's existence takes place. When man pursues his highest aspirations, he seems to be brought to ruin. Knowledge and freedom reveal to him suffering, guilt and death.

The hero exists, i.e., he is "outstanding."⁴ Or—to put the matter in terms of the dramatic form itself—the hero breaks out of the Chorus. It is, let it be remembered, the Chorus that evaluates the situation of Oedipus at the end of the play, from the security of its life "prior to existence"—a role performed by Ishmael, saved in his coffin, at the end of *Moby Dick*, as W. H. Auden has pointed out.

Existence as such, is the hybris of the hero. His suffering is brought upon him at the hands of the gods through the necessity of having to choose. The divine judgment upon his primal presumption of existing is having to choose! His existence is that for which he must pay—a notion appearing no less powerfully in Anaximander's judgment about the world of time and space: "The non-limited is the original material of existing things; further, the source from which existing things derive their existence is also that to which they return at their destruction, according to necessity; for *they*

⁴ Existere "means 'to stand outside of one's causes,' or 'outside nothingness, to emerge from the night of non-being, or from that of mere possibility, or that of potency.'" J. Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, p. 12, note.

give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of Time."⁵

The hero's original crime is existence itself and everything that happens from the beginning works itself out in inexorable grandeur. Everything bears home to him this necessity: the more intensely he tries to escape, the more inevitably he seems to become entangled. In trying to exercise foresight, wisdom and responsibility for himself—e.g., Oedipus' flight when told he will kill his father and marry his mother—; in seeking to extricate himself from his situation, to outwit the gods, to overcome by increase of knowledge and responsibility; he only hastens his downfall. For it is the exercise of foresight, wisdom and responsibility for himself which produces the situation in the first place. To extend these is to exacerbate the problem still further, to compound the crime.

All of this implies, of course, that if man had never "chosen himself," he would never have had to choose at all; and that if he had never had to choose, he would never have become guilty of particular crimes. Yet, this is the greatness of man. At the same time this greatness seems somehow an anomaly in the universe. Therefore man shows his ultimate greatness in this ultimate reach of self-knowledge which enables him to see that he is an anomaly, to acknowledge it, and to acquiesce to it. And we might then add that even for this very reason tragedy doesn't end on a note of agony, but of unrelieved mystery! So the aged Sophocles seems to say in *Oedipus at Colonus*:

III

Let us now consider some of the differences between tragedy thus conceived and what is possible on the background of Biblical presuppositions.

For the Greeks (and of course I grossly over-simplify here) the gods are either the symbols of the several *moirai* or the principle of *moira* itself—the established order. Time is the destroyer of all that is accidental. Only the time-defying is divine. "The immortal/Gods alone have neither age nor death!/ All other things almighty Time disquiets."⁶ A violation of this impersonal order is an act of *hybris*, it is impiety.

For Biblical thought, God is imaged as active, free and faithful will. God's sovereignty resides not in the impersonal order which governs Him or which he governs, but in His freedom, in His power to give absolutely and freely. His divinity is His sovereignty, i.e., uncoerced, will. As it is said: "I will have mercy on

⁵ Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, p. 19; italics my own. This makes us think of the line from *Oedipus the King*, spoken of Oedipus by the Chorus: "Time, who sees all has found you out." (Translated by David Grene, line 1213).

⁶ *Oedipus at Colonus*, translated by Robert Fitzgerald, lines 607f.

whom I will have mercy." A violation of this sovereign will is the attempt to "coerce" it, to identify it with this or that reality, to confine it to some anthropocentric system of meaning, to limit its freedom. This is idolatry.

For the Greeks the arch crime against the gods is impiety—the presumption to threaten their order. For the Hebrews the greatest offense against God is idolatry—the presumption to limit His freedom. A grasp of this distinction is essential to the understanding of the difference between pagan and post-Incarnation "tragic" drama and their respective treatment of human existence and freedom.

This being so, a brief, if slightly simple-minded, digression on this point may be permitted.

To ordinary common sense, experience would appear to have two principal components: the monotonous and the novel. To make sense of experience it is necessary to take account of both these elements; to establish relations between them; to seek to comprehend them both within a single framework. (I do not wish to be side-tracked at the moment by the Wittensteinian claim that such problems arise only when "language goes on holiday." I am content here to claim that, however misguided for want of reading *Mind* and *Analysis*, most philosophers relevant to the present inquiry believed this to be an important part of their job.) One can take one or the other of the two classes of things to be normative: the novel—but on this basis nothing can be said, as Plato sought to show in *Theaetetus*; or the monotonous—but in this case the novel is, in some sense, not real, as appears to have been Parmenides' point. The only remaining alternative seems to be that of taking as normative a third "reality" under which these two may be subsumed, e.g., Plato's cosmos comprised of Being, Non-being and particular things. But this is a kind of subterfuge, for it simply provides a super-monotony. In *this* scheme, we do not have to deny the *reality* of the novel; we only have to deny its *novelty*!

Biblical thought relates monotony and novelty in a quite different way, for they are both seen to be aspects of God's sovereign will, regarded from different standpoints, as it were: monotony and order are seen as the outward manifestations of God's faithfulness; yet He is "choosing to be faithful" anew, in every moment, with the result that there is real novelty both in the orderly and outside it. The contrast here is between the mythopoeic cyclicity—*aesthetic rationality*—underlying Greek thought and the analogy drawn from the continuity-discontinuity of human volitional life which is the root metaphor of Biblical thought.

This Biblical "solution" to the problem of course means that the *apparently* novel may be *really* novel in the way everyone of my acts, in so far as it is this act, is novel; but at the same time it need

not be meaningless because irrational, i.e., form-defying. For however erratic may seem the act of a person, however defiant of our power to place it into a finite and hence comprehensible context of interpretation, it may nevertheless be meaningful to the infinite context of interpretation open to faith—Biblically understood—(e.g., Job's absolute trust of God). The novel, erratic, unpredicted act of will cannot always be rationally known to be related to the stable purposes of that person. But it need not be the case for that reason that it has no relation whatever when we grasp the act as proceeding from a person whom we trust and hence for whose acts we are committed in advance to finding a wider frame of interpretation, and whom we shall not cease to trust even if we fail to find one!

All this further means that Biblically speaking, the world is neither rational nor irrational—in the Greek senses of these words. The world is a creature, i.e., an act of God. Therefore it is, like any act, both continuous and discontinuous with the other acts of an agent—even though a given act may appear to be so radically discontinuous (e.g., God's "mistreatment" of Job) as to require the context of absolute trust to retain any continuity whatever.

The point, however, is that within this scheme the world can still exhibit a certain monotony—the faithfulness of God—at the same time that novelty—the unsearchableness of God's faithfulness—is expected and accepted; and that, therefore, freedom, God's gift to man, is meaningful, indeed is itself the *Imago Dei*, but only in a context larger than that provided by pagan tragedy; in short, only in the context of absolute trust.

This means of course that *existence* and *freedom*—responsible, human selfhood—are not *as such hybris*. Rather it is ego-centric existence and perverted freedom which are pride and sin and, therefore, produced suffering. Sin is thus not *impiety*—the violation of an *established* order. It is the *idolatrous* act of seeking to enclose the other "self" in relation to whom we stand in our own ego-centered world. This is the violation of the personal relation by which, Biblically speaking, our existence as selves, created to stand freely in relation, is constituted.

By way of summary we may then say (putting the matter far too simply) that for Greek thought the ultimate ground of Being is an impersonal cosmic order or law derived from the cycles of nature and the movements of the planets. From this it follows that order is imaged primarily in terms of measure, limit, the finite, the monotonous, *logos*. The circle or sphere becomes the perfect symbol of finiteness, since they can be grasped by an aesthetic reason which remains in complete stasis and repose, and do not in anyway "point" beyond themselves. Existence (whether it be of

"things" as for Anaximander or heroes as for the dramatists), "freedom," being outstanding, i.e., heroic, are *measure-defying*, hence are impiety. "Character"—since it is for the Greek an essentially aesthetic notion, one might almost say, an "architectural" notion—is a structure which is an externalized and "visible" ordering of stresses and strains; is therefore strong or weak; and hamartia is a structural "fault" which causes the structure to be destroyed. The "fault" is thus an immitigable ontological "blemish" without positive meaning. The gods, as personifications of the several orders or *moirai* which are more primitive than they, are *jealous* of man's impiety. Thus being heroic is itself *hybris*. Therefore the value of the hero's self-knowledge and power to bear suffering with courage—in short, the value of freedom and responsible existence—remain ambiguous and subject to doubt until the end. Necessity underlies this world-view. Its final word upon human existence tends to be:

Look upon that last day always.
Count no mortal happy till
he has passed the final limit
of his life secure from pain.⁷

By contrast, for the background provided by post-Incarnation thought, the ultimate ground of Being is a personal, purposing and providential will, derived from an analogy of personal existence, volition and identity. Order is imaged after the analogy of the consistency of a faithful will. Law, or as Kant would say, "the maxim of one's acts," is the "shape" of the will—the perfect symbol of faithfulness. Yet this faithfulness can never be grasped by an aesthetic rationality since neither an act nor a sequence of acts can reveal the innermost purpose or will of their agent; and this inner dimension is the essential feature of the faithfulness of a personal being. "Character" rather than being an aesthetic is an ethical and, ultimately, religious conception. It is internalized to the very center of the person, and is not weak or strong, but faithful or faithless. But this means that "hamartia" is not a structural fault. It is *freedom*—the element which remains "irrational," i.e., form-defying, for aesthetic rationality. But this is the very *conditio sine qua non* of the meaning of both faithfulness and faithlessness; and as sin is but the misuse of the *Imago Dei* through the breaking of that relation the standing within which constitutes true personal existence. Therefore, even sin testifies to a positive value. It is the sign not of man's aesthetic incompleteness or imperfection, but that man, as being man, "ontologically" and "essentially" truly *exists* in a personal relation to God (albeit this sign is one which testifies to the present perversion of that relation).

⁷ *Oedipus the King*, translated by David Grene, lines 1528f.

It follows that existence, freedom and assuming responsibility for oneself before God are not guilty as such. These reflect the image of God in man. Existence and freedom are gifts. *Hybris*—or properly sin—is instead ego-centric existence; it is *perverted* freedom. Therefore, possibility underlies this world-view. With Greek drama we always say: what a pity it had to be thus; in post-Incarnation "tragedy" we say: what a pity it was thus, when it might have been otherwise.⁸ "Hybris" is then the act of turning the gift of freedom into a theft; the act of claiming existence, which is essentially a gift, as though it were one's own to scrutinize, judge, take or leave, and justify for oneself; rather than something to be received.

In terms of these categories, the "jealousy" of God becomes different also. God is not "jealous" of man's freedom—as with the Greeks; he is after all its author. He is jealous that man should fulfill rather than frustrate his freedom. The jealous God is none other than the loving God when he is apprehended by the guilty-conscience. The wrath of God is misapprehended love; it is the appearance which God's love has when we confront it in ego-centric infidelity to that relation which constitutes our existence.

This finally means that post-Incarnation "tragic" drama is the "tragedy" of defiance. It is truly "tragic" in that, within the limits of the literary work in which it is presented, there is no resolution of the defiance. Ahab, Iago, Macbeth, Claggart, Ivan Karamazov, Kirillov—all are overwhelmed by the wrath of God and variously respond with defiance. They wilfully destroy themselves or others. God does not damn them, they damn themselves by their own defiant choice, thus showing the greatness of man's freedom.

Even so, the "cosmos" in which these acts of defiance occur is not a closed but open one. We feel: it might have been otherwise. These heroes are damned by God's refusal to deny to them this ultimate extension of His gift of freedom. God does not—nor ought the author—save them with a *deus ex machina*. Yet even the damned are not ultimately damned—or at any rate—are not *known* to be ultimately damned. The *eschaton* and the Last Judgment are symbols within Christian thought of the tentativeness of the ultimate situation of the damned *vis a vis* God. In these we have a much more explicit indication of the extra-tragic frame of meaning to which, I have said, pagan tragedy points but upon which it remains finally silent, since it was committed at the outset to the limits of aesthetic rationality. Purgatory is a symbol of the belief that even for the damned hope is not exhausted. We feel of these "tragic"

⁸ I am indebted to W. H. Auden for this distinction.

heroes that at any moment—during or after the drama is over—they *may* be saved through repentance.

Thus, the flaw is not in the "fundamental structure of reality" (if this slightly question-begging phrase may be permitted), but in the self which destroys its freedom through its eccentric exercise. For the pagan tragedians salvation comes through acquiescence to fate: the foreswearing of existence and freedom. For post-Incarnation "tragic" drama, salvation comes through repentance: the accepting of existence and freedom as a gift!

At the outset, I held that the tragic was one of several attitudes which we may adopt to the contradictions of human existence, it being the one which we most naturally adopt when these contradictions are thought to be both serious and ultimate. I want now to conclude by saying that in view of the extra-tragic frame of meaning given in post-Incarnation thought, the drama dominated by this world-view is serious irony rather than tragedy. The cosmos of the Christian faith is an open cosmos. It cannot therefore be comprehended by aesthetic rationality. Hence, where the Greeks "know too much" concerning the ultimate cosmic destiny of the hero, the Christian is not sure; and where the Greeks "know" nothing at all, the Christian is quite certain—though certain by faith (trust) alone—that a providential, purposing, creating and freedom-giving God has the final word in all things.

Therefore, even if the contradictions in human existence are serious, they are not *known* to be ultimate; for God has the final word; that word has not yet been spoken; and a meaningful freedom still has all possibility before it.

The Fifth Season

Drink milk this night
the body water-beads
a cold wet glass of bones and brine
to pray a rosary of sweat
in a prison dreamed
of make believe moments
when the world must end.

Drink milk this night
the trembling fingers taunt
death is a virus near or far
the fascination fear
consumes the clothlump in your throat,
leaves you as it found you
lost in a visionary thousand eyes,
none of which see or pretend to hear
your counting cries, the veils, archaic names.

Drink milk this lifeless night
when neither taste nor memory
drifts through the room
a single movement of tide
nor rainfall cleanse nor leaves
brushing roads in all directions green.

This is the fifth season laughter
throated by the old
with sure mocking fingers
about which the young have heard
panes thresholds with glass
and floors with angelic terror;—
 drink milk, drink long,
 wipe face and eyes
 once quickly
 for someone sees you rise.

SEYMOUR GRESSER

I Think That I Shall Never See

By ONA C. EVERS

Around the Carmel mountains, around that region, it's a place that's hard to joke about. You can try to—many of the people are certainly gay—but it always ends up like something out of Robinson Jeffers.

Remember that old door-knob manufacturer turned sculptor? His wife used to wear a sable cloak and nothing else, nothing under it at all. She was very beautiful, and she used to go around hugging trees. She really loved those trees. She certainly preferred them to her husband. And no wonder—he spent all his time whanging away at great hunks of rock, splitting it in all directions and pretending that's what he had meant to do. He had no sense about stone at all, using rocks like Carmel flag that would flake in great flat slabs like slate. I suppose you could say he was funny—a brawny red-faced type, chisel in one hand, mallet in the other, whanging away in the middle of the Spanish rococo living room while hoards of people swirled around him, drinking his cocktails and sneaking off into his bedrooms. His wife didn't care for parties, though. If you went out in the patio, you could see her leaping about in her fur coat, clinging first to this tree, then to that. There were plenty of trees, and she never played favorites that anyone ever heard of.

They could have gone on for years happily, but one night that atmosphere—that brooding tragic atmosphere—caught up with them, and next morning she was found hanging from one of her trees, lovely and naked in the gray fog. The gardener who found her was afraid to touch her sable cloak, where it had slipped to the ground, and afraid to go to the house where the late-rising servants had found the door-knob manufacturer crushed under a great marble chunk. It was a sad thing, because they had seemed a happy contented couple, each in his own separate way.

To this day no one knows just what happened, or why, and nothing much was ever done to find out. In those days so many strange and tragic events occurred—and were accepted.

Even now, when the town of Carmel is—oh, well, everyone knows what Carmel is now. The retired school teachers walking up and down the streets hoping the tourists will take them for famous

singers and actors, anyone famous. And the tourists prowling in and out, in and out of the crowded little shops. Even now there's a broody excitement about the place.

The natives know it, but they won't admit it. There was Margie "My goodness, you'd think we were all Bohemians or some-Cain, for instance. A nice ordinary girl who used to laugh to her friends about the self-conscious artiness and the "tragic shores," thing. A few nit-wits move down here, and people start thinking we're all crazy artists or something."

Margie certainly was no artist—she was bright enough, but "I just ain't got talent," she would say. And she hadn't—at least, not the talents you mean when you say "talent." She was a marvelous cook—but the plain kind. Not foreign things. She made a wonderful chowder and could cook pompano or abalone brought by her friends from the bay, but even the thought of bouillabaise or *homard à l'ecossaise* set her teeth on edge. She lived with her parents (her father was the local truant officer), worked in that little circulating library near the photography studio, and went out twice a week with Eddie Stanton, to whom she was becoming gradually engaged. She considered herself living proof that Carmelites need not be colorful.

Then it started to happen. Anyone knowing where she was born and raised could have predicted it.

She fell in love with a bar tender over at Henry's—she used to stop in once a month with Eddie after a show. She fell completely in love with him.

"He's very sensitive," she told her friends.

Eddie accepted the bar tender stolidly. "She'll get over it," he said. "Let her have some fun. She'll marry me when she gets this out of her system."

As for the bar tender, whose name was Alvin, he was indeed a sensitive creature, a shy woodland elf, and heaven knows how he landed a job behind Henry's bar.

"Alvin needs someone who understands him," she told everyone. So one night she and Alvin eloped to Reno.

Unfortunately, she picked the very night that her father was shot to death by a disgruntled high school student. As you may imagine, this made for a dreadful mix-up, everyone thinking that perhaps Alvin had done the terrible deed.

"How could anyone think Alvin would shoot papa!" Since Margie's father had put every obstacle in the path of the romance, even threatening to shoot "that damn fairy," the town remained suspicious until the high school student suddenly confessed.

But Margie still maintained that she was just an everyday sort of girl. That was her phrase—"I'm just an everyday sort of girl. All

I care about is homemaking. Just making a little home for Alvin to come home to." They found an apartment in the late door-knob manufacturer's home. It had been made into bachelor apartments and one apartment for a couple, and that's the one Margie and Alvin moved into. Decorated in a quaint and artistic way, too. That was another phrase of Margie's. "I just won't admit that Carmel is eccentric and tragic, but it is quaint and artistic. It's really quaint and artistic."

To everyone's surprise, she and Alvin were very happy. At first, she tried to get him to change his job—"It's so embarrassing when people ask me what my husband does.", but a bar tender makes so much that neither of them could resist the salary. And then to everyone's astonishment, Margie became pregnant. It had to be Alvin, the kind of girl Margie was. Alvin gained new respect over at Henry's, even a small pay raise, and he didn't have to serve drinks in the fairy palace end of the bar anymore.

"I'm so happy," Margie told everyone. "Everyday I walk in the ground among the trees. It's just beautiful."

"Which tree did she hang herself from?" someone almost always asked. Margie would look uncomfortable, but she always pointed it out. "That one there—the madrone with the branch that sticks out so far."

"Is that the branch?" Staring at it.

Margie would nod shortly. "Come on in and see the layette. It's just darling."

Margie's mother was the first to notice the change in Margie. She herself had changed considerably since achieving widowhood. Immediately after her husband's death, she had gone on a spending spree like a sailor come to port, and then had settled into a spruce smartness. She had even gone partners with another widowed lady, and they now ran one of the more expensive and successful gift shops in town.

"Margie doesn't approve of me anymore," she told her partner one day.

"Well, you certainly have changed, dear. I used to always think of you as one of those women who's eternally sticking her head in an oven while she clutches pot holders."

"I've always preferred eating out—I just never got to," said Margie's mother. From the distance of Margie's disapproval, Margie's mother was able to get a better perspective of Margie's marriage.

"You know, I always did like Alvin. I can't stand too dominating men—regular old God-the-Fathers."

"But, dear!" protested her partner, "your own husband—"

"Let us not speak ill of the dead," said Margie's mother. "Anyway, it's Margie I'm worrying about."

"Why, dear? Isn't she well?"

"Oh, she's well enough, but she seems to be—well, to be thinking or something. Margie's never been one to go around thinking and thinking."

Alvin, too, had noticed the change. His hours varied, and sometimes he would come home to find Margie wandering about in the grounds, a sad dreamy look on her round rosy face. And her face wasn't as rosy as it had been, either.

"Why don't you walk down to the beach or something?" Alvin would ask nervously.

"Oh, no, honey. I don't like to walk anywhere but here. It's so lovely. The garden and the trees. Those wonderful wonderful trees."

"Margie," Alvin could look straight into her eyes, being of the same height. "Margie, what's wrong? You're so sort of—oh, I don't know—sad or something lately."

She was surprised. "Sad? Me, sad! Oh, no! I'm happy. I just like to walk around under the trees, looking at them. I just love these trees!" She threw her arms out in a wide gesture.

Alvin skittered to the doctor, who received him coldly. He was very fashionable and didn't consider Alvin fit material for fatherhood to a baby delivered by him.

"Nonsense! There's nothing the matter with her. Maybe you're making her nervous. Follow her around and watch her, do you, hey?"

Alvin swallowed. "Not follow exactly. But she's so sort of—well, not sad exactly, but she's different." He peered anxiously at the doctor.

"Good heavens, man!" the doctor paused, looking at Alvin speculatively. "Man," he repeated as if to reassure himself. "Good heavens, she's pregnant. They get all sorts of fancies—think it'll be the end of them, or that nobody likes them—all sorts of things. Now, my advice to you is—go home, eat properly, plenty of rest, and I'm sure Margie'll make out just fine."

Alvin went home.

Their own apartment was up among the bedrooms which the door-knob manufacturer had joined loosely together on the hillside. Avoiding that end of the house, he stopped at the one-room apartment, formerly the living room, where an artist friend of his lived.

"Er—Bill—mind if I come in? Do you?"

"Come on in. Close the door!" Bill sat before an easel dabbing with little furtive swipes at a canvas, as if he expected something to take shape there when he wasn't looking.

"Say, have you seen Margie lately?" Alvin asked abruptly.

"Today?" Bill looked around the corner of the easel at him, and Alvin shifted uneasily.

"Well, not necessarily today. Lately, I mean."

"Oh. Oh, sure. Mooning around in the garden almost every day. Why?"

Alvin lit a cigarette with three matches. "Well, have you—does she seem to be one place more than another?"

"What?" Bill flicked the canvas with his brush, then watched it from the corners of his eyes. "How do you mean?"

"Well, one place more than another."

"Oh." Bill thought a moment. "She's usually up by the madrones above the house."

"The madrones?" Alvin's face turned pale. "You mean the ones—?"

"Yeah. Where the beauteous former owner used to hang out." He laughed heartily, but Alvin scurried up to his own apartment.

Fatherhood, Margie had decided, must be extra hard for sensitive men like Alvin.

"What's wrong, honey?" she would ask as Alvin refused a second helping from the casserole. "You're so nervous, honey. Always asking me about walking in the garden."

"Oh, no. No." Alvin drank his tea quickly. "No. No. Uh—why don't you walk down to see your mother, or Joyce or somebody. If you have to walk. Maybe you're walking too much. I think you should rest more. You want me to get you some books from the library?"

"No, I don't want you to get me some books from the library."

"Well, you try resting more, Margie."

"But I'm supposed to walk. That's one of the things you're supposed to do. Alvin, I just don't know what's gotten into you. Don't you want me to walk in the garden?"

"Oh—yes, yes."

"Well, I should think so. Anyway I wouldn't walk any place else. I just love it here—the trees, and—Alvin, I just love those trees—all the pines and firs and bay and oak and madrone. Oh, I just love them so much I could *bug* them!"

She stared at him and he stared at her.

His cup clattered in his saucer. Her hand flew out, then back toward her mouth as if to recapture the words she had said.

"Oh, but that's so silly!" she said at last. "I certainly have no intentions of—"

"Of course not, of course not, of course you haven't!" he said hastily.

"Then why did you—when I—Alvin, you've been going around thinking things behind my back!"

"I haven't! But why are you so craz—so—so fond of those old trees?"

"Oh, how do I know?" She was close to tears now. "You're getting just like everybody else around here! Trying to make things out of things that are—just things. How do I know why?"

"Oh, now look, Margie, honey—"

Margie moved away from him as he went around to her. "You really do think I'm going—" Well, how could she say a word like that?

"No, no! Of course not, of course not! My gosh, lots of girls when they're pregnant get all sorts of queer—"

"Alvin!! You *do* think I am!" She stood up with as much dignity as her figure would allow her. "I'm just an everyday sort of girl, and I think it's most unfair of you—imagine going around thinking things like that about me! Alvin, you have hurt me deeply." She walked from the room leaving a contrite husband behind her.

He sat at the table, thin hand against thin face, thinking abject thoughts for quite a while. He had been unfair, he had been unkind. He had been conjuring ghosts where none existed. His Margie was just the everyday sort of girl she had always maintained that she was.

He leaned back and lit a cigarette, his load lightened. He felt bouyant and free again.

But Margie—the next morning as she started on her walk in the grounds, she suddenly decided not to, then she decided she would after all, but she didn't walk very long, and in the afternoon she didn't go out at all. For about a week she hardly set foot outside. The layette was finished, but she started to crochet a little jacket just in case it might be needed. Most of the time, though, she just sat at the window looking out thoughtfully at the madrone trees.

When her friends came to call, she would mention the trees, and then watch their faces. It made them nervous, so that they acted rather tense toward her. She would nod sadly, staring, staring into their faces.

"What's wrong with Margie?" they asked each other. "She'd better hurry up and have that baby."

After a week or so she started going out into the garden, but she didn't walk around. She just went up to the little grove of madrones and would stand there, looking at them and flicking off the little red-brown curls of dry bark with her thumb.

When Alvin came home each night, he was hearty and cheerful. "Have a nice walk in the garden today, honey?"

She wouldn't look at him. Well, he could understand that. After all, he had hurt her deeply.

And then one day she found a long strong rope, all coiled neatly

in a corner of the garage. It belonged to one of the bachelors, a yachtsman, and when he found it gone, he accused everyone in the place but Margie.

She kept it hidden under her suitcase, which was all packed for her trip to the hospital. Almost every day she took it out and ran it through her fingers, then carefully coiled it up again.

At last the time must have seemed right to her, because on an evening when Alvin was working late, she took the rope under her coat, and walked slowly and heavily up to the madrones. At the large madrone with the out-reaching branch, she stopped, and looked around her as if to somehow, in that one look, take in and confirm all the brooding tragedy of the place. She looped the rope in her left hand, and took the knotted end in her right. With a mighty swing she threw the end up, up and over the spreading branch. As she leaned back, watching the smooth snake of it uncoil up, over and down, something happened. Just a small something. A tiny burning pain right in the middle of her spinal column. She stared straight ahead, her eyes wide, then she turned and marched down the hill.

Afterward, when everyone said how much the baby looked like Alvin, and how nice it was that she seemed to be feeling so much better, she would look at them with surprise. "But I felt fine all along! Just fine. You know me, I'm just built for this business—it comes easy. I'm just an everyday sort of girl."

The Two of Them

By HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

Translated by IRVING J. WEISS

She held the wine cup in her hand
—Her chin and lip were like its rand—
Her step so light and confident
That no drop threatened to be spent.

So light and steady was his hand:
Astride a young horse he drew near,
With careless gesture made it rear
Superbly and then quivering stand.

Yet when he reached out for her hand
To take the light cup as his prize,
Suddenly it became like lead,
For both were trembling so instead,
That no hand could its mate command
And dark wine spilled before their eyes.

On a Wounded Mock Orange Bush

Tucked like some obvious flags over our domains,
My mock oranges aptly decorate these shy dimensions
And subvert the landscape of my conscience.
These bushes, swaying sentinels against a common love
Of a neighbor's land, swish their obsequious plots
About the boundaries of our shallow democracies
And crowd like a parade my careful freedoms.

The boy who hurdles my barberry hedge and thrusts
His innocence at private wills reduces usurpations
By one torn twig. I am framed at the window,
Portrait of proprietary justice imposed on sierras
Of childhood. And I remain the casualty of his retreat,
Spending this victory like the sober commander
Who adorns his authority with bitter silence.

Each generation learns its separateness,
Subtly adopting those tortuous civil armors
Which make us ponderous in springtime,
And like an accomplished general, relaxes
Within the patterned movements of decades.
And loveliness survives outside our thoughts
In perennial rejuvenation.

HENRY BIRNBAUM

Fast Flight

By RALPH E. GRIMES

The old man watched the weathervane and thought of Heraclitus, who was dead.

All was flux. This much the old man knew. He also knew that the knowledge itself would not stay put in his brain. He tried to grapple with the thought, to hold it in place. It was hard. He was tired.

He watched the weathervane.

All was flux, and he said as much to his son.

The son said nothing, but within denied the thought. Some things would never change. The incessant and unutterable rambling of old men. This would not stop. This would go on forever. Everyone else might die, throughout the world, of boredom, but the old men would keep talking. This much was permanent.

He hardly ever answered his father now, except in his head. In his head he replied with wonderful, shameful replies. It was really too bad, in a way, but what could you do? You had to do something. You had to stay sane. And you couldn't encourage him.

The old man spoke, his fingers tamping the tobacco in his pipe, the words and the tobacco being molded in the same slow pace.

"I have lived, as people reckon things," he said, "for a number of years."

A match poised in his fingers, hissed suddenly, and struck.

"I want to tell you something," he continued, breathing heavily, as if his life depended on the fire in the bowl. "I want to tell you what I call a piece of wisdom."

Smoke drifted like fog in between them.

My lord, it comes. If you can't swim, reach for the chandeliers. The stars.

Such were the thoughts of the young man, sitting beside his father, wiggling his toes, impatiently. A funny thing to do, first one and then the other. Treading water. Grinning, he held his head up out of the sea of sleep, and above the ocean of words.

"About life," said the old man, "about how quick it goes."

So let's all spend it talking. Tic-toc-talking.

"For all that you never think of it, probably, I was once young myself."

Sure, Pop, with Noah.

"And do you know how long it took me to grow old?"

No . . .

"Not very long at all."

No . . . ah. The patriarch. Two of a kind.

"I guess, like everybody else, I had a talent for it."

You should have buried it. Will soon, I guess. It's later when you think. It's berry time in Picardy. In Flanders Field. My pop. No, going too far. A nice old man. My pop.

"But I have learned something in my time. The meaning of a word. Last. The word last. Do you know what that means? It means no more. It means nothing. Forever."

In the beginning was the word. And the first shall be the last. And the last shall be nothing. Forever.

"So you see, you learn to look at all things very hungrily. Because, whatever you see may be the last. And whatever you hear."

The old man, like the young man, burrowed into his thoughts, retreating within the sphere, which like a withered Atlas, he bore up upon his shoulders. With ear alone awake, he listened and he heard: the late buzzing of bees; the creak of sleep; the rumble of slumber; the throes of dozing and the droning of a plane.

It was one of the first I saw, with my own eyes. Yes, sir. These two old eyes of mine saw one of the very first. And this may be the last.

Snapping his lids apart, he stared the sky straight in the face. It was gone. The damn thing flew too fast, too bloody fast.

For the first time now, the young man spoke to him.

"Now there," he said, "now there is really something to look at, Pop, a B-47. Did you see the B-47?"

The old man nodded, watched the weathervane. It quivered, pointed to the north like a divining rod.

It was not only cold, it was late.

The pipe had gone out, and his pockets were empty of matches. He turned to his son and accepted the pack that the son had ready waiting in his hand.

"You keep them, Pop," he said. "I've got a million of them."

In Review

The Green Mare by Marcel Ayme.
Harper & Brothers, New York, 1956.

Marcel Ayme, a middle-aged Frenchman from Juvisy, has, since the publication of his *Aller-Retour* in 1927, been delighting the French public and the most capable French critics almost yearly with books which are distinguished by a certain sly pleasure in the wickedness of this, to him, always fantastic and dishonest world. Like his music-hall compatriot, M. Maurice Chevalier, M. Ayme is constantly discovering and rediscovering, with enormous joy, the existence of s-e-x.

American readers who discovered the sometimes brilliant and constantly mordant satire of Ayme in *The Barkeep of Bleumont* (Harper's 1950) will be glad to know that another of his twenty-odd books is being published in this country. *The Green Mare*, in keeping with some of its author's best work, is concerned with country life near a small town in France. As usual, the ordinary, everyday world is distorted by the appearance in its midst of a singular occurrence: in this case, the foaling of a remarkably green mare.

The circumstances concerning the reception of the green mare are such that the author can let the mare cast a light of ghastly satire over the generation of the family which has had the misfortune to preserve its image in an oil painting.

From time to time we are even fortunate enough to hear, straight from the green mare's mouth, her acute and honest observations on the hypocrisies and conformities behind which the majority of the small French villagers live. We hear direct from the fabulous beast the true reaction of the mother seduced by a German soldier to protect her son who is hiding under the bed. We learn the real, complex and subtle motive of the priest who sends beggars to beg at the door of another of the

sons. In short, we see the disturbing events which make up the daily, outwardly drab, life of the penny-wise country people and then we hear the shocking motives which have led to these events in the French countryside. But such is the icy regard of the green mare's steady gaze at false and ridiculous conventions, that the American reader may find himself embarrassed and exposed.

In spite of M. Ayme's gallic ability to stare straight into the most shocking of situations and to shrug coldly and wisely, we are reassured that the shrug is not without some innocent warmth and that it may well be followed by an approving wink.

Unless your Grandmother is the bawdy old lady which Marcel Ayme could well convince you she might be, this is a book for your own bedside table, not hers.

—Max Steele

J. Robert Oppenheimer, *The Open Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955. 146 pp. \$2.75.

Recently a public lecturer said that the modern world is being led politically by men who have never heard of it. It is not easy to know. "This is a world," as our author says, "in which each of us, knowing his limitations, knowing the evils of superficiality and the terrors of fatigue, will have to cling to what is close to him, to what he knows, to what he can do, to his friends and his tradition and his love, lest he be dissolved in a universal confusion and know nothing and love nothing." This statement itself, however, betrays that Mr. Oppenheimer is not so hemmed in. And the overall force, and it is considerable, of this collection of addresses by the great physicist who directed the laboratory at Los Alamos during the war years, is that here is a man, although a highly skilled specialist in a

narrow field, who has rare insight into and an extensive grasp of the human situation in the modern world. Ironically he has been barred from scientific secrets of our government and condemned for giving counsel on policy matters in his former role as technical adviser to the Atomic Energy Commission.

Being aware of the extent to which the strange and confusing modern world is the making of science, Mr. Oppenheimer, as a scientist, feels a keen sense of responsibility for helping man to understand and to gain and to keep control of the situation. He firmly believes that much can be learned in this realm from science itself. However, there is no "scientism" here. He recognizes the asymmetries between a theoretical problem for which the scientific method is appropriate and a practical problem involving value-judgments and requiring decision. But he thinks that in the *spirit* of science there is hope.

What he calls "the open mind," or the spirit of science, is characterized this way: "... a total lack of authoritarianism." "We learn that views may be useful and inspiring although they are not complete. We come to have a great caution in all assertions of totality, of finality or absoluteness . . . We learn to throw away those instruments of action and those modes of description which are not appropriate to the reality we are trying to discern, and in this most painful discipline, find ourselves modest before the world." A student of physics "must come to understand . . . the notion of complementarity, which recognizes that various ways of talking about physical experience may each have validity, and may each be necessary for the adequate description of the physical world, and may yet stand in a mutually exclusive relationship to each other, so that to a situation to which one applies, there may be no consistent possibility of applying the other." All this adds up to modesty, tentativeness, and willingness to proceed in a fragmentary and pragmatic manner.

Science "is an area of collective effort in which there is a clear and well-defined community whose canons of taste and order simplify the life of the practitioner. It is a field in which the technique of experiment has given an almost perfect harmony to the balance between thought and action." "The work of science is cooperative; a scientist takes his colleagues as judges, competitors and collaborators. That does not mean, of course, that he loves his colleagues; but it gives him a way of living with them which would not be without its use in the contemporary world. . . ." "Science is disciplined in its rejection of questions that cannot be answered and in its grinding pursuit of methods for answering all that can." "Science is novelty and change. When it closes it dies."

"These qualities," Mr. Oppenheimer says, "constitute a way of life which of course does not make wise men from foolish, or good men from wicked, but which has its beauty and which seems singularly suited to man's estate on earth."

I take it that the suggested program would advocate that we be ready to throw away or to modify our social, economic, political, moral and religious beliefs when we confront problems for which they do not yield solutions; or that we be prepared to espouse one political or moral belief for one set of problems and another incompatible with it for other situations; and so forth. While such procedures may work in some areas or at some levels in all areas, there is a problem with respect to fundamentals. In fact the goals toward which we strive are defined in terms of our basic beliefs. In this area, when we differ with respect to the beliefs to be tested pragmatically, we differ with respect to the goals in terms of which the beliefs are judged. Certainly we need tolerance and open-mindedness, but a mind must have some commitments to function at all. Where basic commitments are not universally accepted, the procedure breaks down. Indeed Mr. Oppenheimer recognizes that science

can proceed in its tentative, pragmatic manner only because "there is a well-defined community whose cannons of taste and order simplify the life of the practitioner." There is little hope of attaining an analogue of this for the world at large.

Furthermore, the modern human situation makes for closure even in areas where openness is theoretically possible. In our author's words, quoted above: "This is a world in which each of us . . . will have to *cling* to what is close to him, to what he knows, to what he can do, to his friends and his tradition and his love, lest he be dissolved in a universal confusion."

Although there are theoretical and psychological limits to open-mindedness, it cannot be denied that human affairs would be greatly improved with the extension of the spirit of science.

E. M. Adams

Nikos Kazantzakis, *Freedom or Death*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956.

The young boy asks the old man:

"How has life seemed to you during those hundred years, Grandfather?"

"Like a glass of cool water, my child," replied the old man.

"And are you still thirsty, Grandfather?"

"Woe to him," he cried in a loud voice, as though he were pronouncing a curse, "woe to him who has slaked his thirst."

The characters of Olympic proportion in the novels of Nikos Kazantzakis, runner-up for the Nobel Prize, never slake their thirst. Whether they be saints, revolutionaries, sensualists, or heartless misers, they challenge life both for the fulfillment of the one passion which rules them or for the pleasure of their senses. They accept life fully,



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with all that it implies. If to be a saint, death is necessary: they accept death. If to love Crete till the love becomes an inarticulate passion that can only be consumed in death: then they die for Crete. The sharp, pungent smells of Crete and Greece, of women, of food, and of men in passion infuse his novels with a realism firmly rooted in men's senses. Yet a keen insight into the dual nature of man as a body informed with an unquenchable soul is fused with this joyful, sometimes painful, sensual apprehension of life.

In *Freedom or Death*, the revolutionary passion of the Cretans to free themselves from the oppressive rule of the Turks carries the novel through a gamut of blood and revenge to a cataclysmic conclusion. Captain Michales, the "Wild Boar," is called to conference by the Nuri Bey, because Michales' brother has carried an ass into the Mosque at prayers. During their conference Nuri Bey permits his wife Emine, a wild Circassian beauty, to sing for them. Michales is seized by a sexual passion which he had never experienced before. Even his semiannual eight-day drunken orgy cannot exorcise the demanding, yet speechless passion, and his single outlet is to ride into the coffeehouse of the Turks. A series of revenge murders follows in which Michales' brother is killed and Nuri Bey is permanently wounded. Finally, riots break out in the port city of Megolokastis, and all Crete raises up in flames. During the ensuing campaign, Michales leaves his post to rescue Emine from a band of hostile Turks, and then he kills her that he might rid himself of the evil passion and fight more effectively. The rebels capitulate, but he refuses and chooses death with a small band of followers who become martyrs for Cretan independence.

The wild passion of Captain Michales for freedom is generalized and becomes the cry of Crete for independence. In his first novel published in this country, *Zorba: The Greek* (Simon & Schuster, 1953), the quest is the assertion of life

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over the negations of the Buddha. *The Greek Passion* (Simon & Schuster, 1954) re-enacts the passion of Christ, with the assertion of absolute goodness over absolute evil, although the latter, again, conquers over Christ's message. His characters are faced with a choice, life or negation, absolute good or absolute evil, and Freedom or Death.

The novels of Nikos Kazantzakis are philosophical rather than realistic or naturalistic. The contrast is between thought and passion rather than thought and action. It is the passionate apprehension, not the logical apprehension, of an idea which leads to action. When a man perceives truth with his heart then he will act. The school teachers and thinkers are rendered ineffectual by an excess of thought. Only when vain questionings are cast off can effective action begin. The Cretan captains are possessed by one idea—freedom. To modern doubt, the author opposes full commitment to a single belief outside of self—whether it be freedom, God, or the senses. Zorba, judged by one set of references, is a sensual vagabond; by another, a man who has lived with passionate intensity. Kazantzakis may be called a romanticist rather than a realist. This is not to say that his characters are not three dimensional, but rather that they are infused by this single passion and the rest of their character is auxiliary. His novels pose big questions, life or death, religion or anarchy, freedom or slavery. His characters must be as big as the questions he poses. Captain Michales almost reaches the ceiling when he stands, he breaks a glass with two fingers, unarmed he quells a mob of blood-thirsty Turks. Manolios, the hero of *The Greek Passion*, offers himself twice as a sacrifice for his friends. Zorba's passions reach a point when he must express himself in dance rather than speech.

The structure of the novels are determined, to a great extent, by the topic. The omniscient author tells the story in *Freedom or Death* and *The Greek*

Passion. Zorba is a first-person narrative. In the former, the theme demands dramatic situations—situations in which a man must choose and fully commit himself to a line of action. In *Zorba*, the gradual evolution of a philosopher into a man of heart and feeling and the influence of the zestful Zorba on this development necessitate a first-person narrator. Although the novel is carried along by the ebullient Zorba, it has some serious structural defects, often it becomes involved in a vague mysticism. Only when Zorba sweeps away the dust of thought does it turn to real life. Not so with *Freedom or Death*. The novel is deftly paced so that the revolution is an inevitable result of a snowballing series of incidents rooted in the passions of Captain Michales and his family. In each climax, the riots, Michales' murder of Emine, the revolution, the heroic qualities of the characters have ample opportunity to expand to their fullest extent. Beside the heroic characters, the scene is filled with minor, but often fully-realized characters. Precisely and quickly, the author identifies these people by what they value most; then they are given ample opportunity to exhibit themselves in dramatic action. The cluster of minor characters in *Freedom or Death* forms around the central theme of freedom. In crises their predominant passion is either overcome and they become men, or they retreat and sink farther into the insect world of their own making. If the one-dimensional technique employed on the minor characters reminds the reader of Dickens, the heroic intensity of the major characters is close to Dostoevski's method. Yet such careful plotting to develop a theme has concomitant flaws. Often the bare ribs of plot show through, especially when the author races to his climax. Though at times the tragic action borders on melodrama, more often a tragic scene comes off remarkably well. The author sketches in quickly the background of smell, taste, and sight; then his characters play out the scene with their contrast-

ing passions clashing to an effective, often tragic consequence.

We can learn life from Nikos Kazantzakis. He forces us to remember that "God is a potter: He works in mud." His energetic men sweep away paltry objections with their absolute love of life, of passion, and of God. If they sometimes break the bond of the form which encompasses them, it is due to an excess of life. If the author introduces apparently useless characters, the men themselves are interesting. When the rules of the novel finally appear to be obvious, a genius like Kazantzakis writes a work that sweeps them away "and demands its own rules." A twentieth-century novel need not be one of questions and negation.

G. A. Santangelo

Donald Hall, *Exiles and Marriages*, New York: Viking Press, 1955.

Ernest Kroll, *The Pauses of the Eye*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1955.

In the work of Donald Hall there can be seen an Horatian-like poet at play. I say this because the poems in *Exiles and Marriages* exhibit together both the unextinguishing satiric light, always short of satire, that the classical poet displays, and the dignity of an image-maker who is always at least once removed from his subject. This compliment, and I mean it to be such, is one which can be paid to several poems in particular in the volume:

*Bowing he asks her the favor,
Blushing she answers she will,
Waltzing they turn through the ball-
room,
Swift in their skill.*

*Blinder than buffers of autumn
Deaf but to music's delight,
They dance like the puppets of music
All through the night.*

This is from *Iuvenes Dum Sumus*. It seems to display a view as objective as can be constructed by a sympathetic poet, but full and deliberately non-

static in its imagery. The subtlety of Mr. Hall's poetic technique attracted the earliest comments about his work; the attractiveness of this quality is heightened, it seems to me, in these poems: *Wedding Party*, *Passage to Worship*, *The Old Must Watch Us*, *The End of January*, *The Body Politic*, and the poem quoted from above.

Not much less characteristic is the poet's continual haunt of the past. He seems interested, in his better poems, in a valued study of what has preceded him, as man, at the present state; the introspection inherent in the birth of such a poem as *Passage to Worship* is clear, but the guiding objectivity of his style will not allow us to regard it as a personal poem.

*Those several times she cleaved my
dark,
Silver and homeless, I from sleep
Rose up, and tried to touch or mark
That storied personage with deep
Unmotivated love.*

The realization is objectivized:

*Demanding worship, and no word
But honoring the steadfast dead.*

This is a statement reiterated again in the quite excellent passages of *The End of January*; where once

*All the world was fractured with
delight
Five years ago July, when she, six-
teen. . . .*

only finally to be seen

*. . . when three years of love had
rounded out,
I said that love was over, and no
doubt.*

The criticism most to be made of the book is that it includes too many poems which suffer by comparison with the half-dozen which distinguish themselves as of a different stage of development in the poet's ability,—which is perhaps a criticism to be made of the

requirements for submission to award committees.

Ernest Kroll, in his second book, *The Pauses of the Eye*, demonstrates again the validity of placing him in the tradition of technique made illustrious by Mr. Eliot and the poet who drew one of Mr. Eliot's most enthusiastic welcomes, Robert Lowell. The same harsh and almost, at times, brash ring of the lines is connected in Ernest Kroll's work, as it was in the early work of Lowell especially, with an obvious respect for a disciplined form and metaphysical imagery.

*In October I took a knife to cut
The rose erect on its stalk
And vivid in the cold,*
(Ornamental Iron)

*The sea works at the wreck incessantly,
Finding the welded plates intractable,
No crustacean armor, detachable
As parts of a crab. . .*
(The Wreck)

Example of what I judge to be a respect for Mr. Eliot that is a compliment to both poets is a poem, Emerson, which sins, if it sins at all, by sacrificing much adaptation of the inspiration in order that the inspiration for it may be clear. Compare:

*Melville had Emerson's number:
He saw within the man the "gaping
flaw,"
Rectitude without compassion,
Which would draw
The knotted cord of life
Reluctant through the needle's eye;*

with its literary progenitor:

*Webster was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin
And breastless creatures under ground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.*

It seems possible to say that for both poets, in technique, in subject, and perhaps in allegiance, and in Mr. Eliot's words:

*Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for
sense. . .*

—John Mahoney

Dylan Thomas in America by John Malcolm Brinnin, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955. 303 pp. Price: \$4.00.

At the present time when the memory of the youthful Dylan Thomas is so fresh, when the tragedy of his death still shocks, and when at last his greatness as a poet is universally recognized, Mr. Brinnin's intimate account of Thomas's last three years of alcoholic orgies seems untimely and unfair. Yet, this is the kind of book that one wishes had been written about other great poets whose images linger only as idealized cardboard cut-outs of poetic geniuses living apart from human kind. It is a book that presents the "other side" of Dylan Thomas's character, and that "other side" is about as sordid a picture as one can visualize. As a result, the book seems unfair because there is a loss of perspective; however, when all of the evidence is presented in the case of this very complex poetic personality and when this book is placed in its proper emphasis alongside the other material in the judgment of the totality of that personality, then, and only then, will Mr. Brinnin's book seem to be a valuable contribution. At the present time, however, this journal resembles more the nasty backyard gossip of a neighbor's weak seamy side—albeit true.

As I read this account of monotonous orgies, I tried to keep before me the statement by Dylan's wife, Caitlin, in a letter that forms the preface to this book: "There is no such thing as the one true Dylan Thomas, nor anybody else; but, necessarily, even less so with a kaleidoscopic-faced poet." But the raw reality of the account presented by Brinnin still shocks and sways the reader.

I read Brinnin's book with a feeling of great sorrow, for it presents some

of Thomas's London scenes which I witnessed first-hand. In London, Thomas frequented a Bohemian cellar dive called the Mandrake Club in Meard Street, where I got to know him since it was a gathering place for Oxford students. There Thomas would come nightly with John Heath Stubbs and the other younger poets for a binge of drinking and talking. Always amid the chatter of students, artists, prostitutes, and pimps and the sounds of Spanish "guitars, singers, and screams, there" always would be the resonant musical voice of Dylan Thomas, not once faltering to betray the eating away, like Prometheus, of his liver—a condition that was to lead to a slow agonized death.

If one takes this scene and multiplies it many fold, he will know how depressing this book really is. The portrait presented is that of an oxymoronic personality—the golden-voiced poetic genius, who stirred all who came within his range, clothed in a decayed, gross, alcoholic body. Brinnin's account begins in 1950 when he first arranged to sponsor an American tour of Dylan Thomas in readings from his own poetry. Thomas, destitute financially, arrived in America with the hope, not only for critical success, but also for financial success so that he could keep his children in school and permit himself to return to serious writing. That he achieved the former everyone knows. The failure of the latter aspiration is the story of this book.

From the moment that Thomas arrived in New York, Brinnin knew that he had to cope with an acute alcoholic. What he did not know was that Thomas was also emotionally a helpless child. For Thomas was without regard for either money or responsibility. He stopped writing almost entirely, and the picture one gets of the Dylan Thomas of the years 1950-1953 is the poet as reader rather than the poet as maker.

The personal vagaries of Thomas that are described in this book range from violent physical fights with his

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wife to drunken scenes in which he attacked women and even threw one up to a chandelier, to scuffles in low Third Avenue bars and Greenwich Village bistros, to failing to appear for a reading before a New Orleans audience.

The death throes that resulted from all of this are described minutely by Brinnin from Thomas's first attack of acute D.T.'s until his final nauseating gasp. This section, November, 1953, is an almost unbearable experience for any reader.

For whom is this book written? It is certainly not for those who hold dear the picture of the cherubic poetic genius with the angel voice. Nor is it for those with weak constitutions, for much of it is sickening. But for those who can stand the "other side" of a human being and who are intelligent and mature enough to place this book in its proper relationship with the personality as a whole, for those people this book will have some value.

—Roy C. Moose

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An Apology

We had intended this issue of the Quarterly to contain a special section, including poetry and fiction by William Faulkner, and criticisms and appraisals of his work and position in American letters. It was impossible to prepare and obtain the necessary materials in time for the publication deadline for this issue. The project will, however, be completed in a later issue.

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THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY is published three times annually at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Subscription Rates are \$1.25 per year. Foreign Subscriptions are \$1.75 per year. The CAROLINA QUARTERLY is distributed by Selected Outlets, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, N. J. Printed and bound by Colonial Press, Inc., Chapel Hill, N. C. The CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and belles-lettres. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

the CAROLINA
QUARTERLY

Summer

Vol. VIII, No. III

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SIXTH ANNUAL FICTION AWARDS

First Prize: \$100

to

"The Brothers," by Wendel Berry, Lexington, Kentucky

Second Prize: \$50

to

"The Odor of Judas," by Wyat Helsabeck,
Chapel Hill, N. C.

First Honorable Mention

to

"Child's Heart," by Neil Byer, Fayetteville, Ark.

Second Honorable Mention

to

"Moonscape," by M. R. Rosene, Key West, Florida

Third Honorable Mention

to

"Venetian Song," by Victor Chapin, New York, N. Y.

Of the ninety-odd stories entered in the contest, the five listed above were judged best by the editors. Significantly, the decisions of the six judges were in no instance unanimous. Unfortunately this announcement cannot acknowledge a number of excellent entries which deserve publication, but which must be omitted because of spatial limitations, nor can it indicate the general high quality of the entries as a body.

Such response re-affirms a dramatic increase in literary activity at this University, and manifests the presence of promising new writers whose work will become progressively important to American letters.

The CAROLINA QUARTERLY takes particular pleasure in making this recognition.

The Brothers

By WENDEL BERRY

I. THE CROW

Me and Brother came across by Crandels' house on our way home from the pond. We hadn't caught any fish. Not even a bite. Mrs. Crandel's grandson that comes up to see her from Louisville was setting on the grass in the front yard, playing with a pet crow. Old man Crandel had caught the crow before it was big enough to fly and give it to him. The boy was all cleaned up and had his Sunday clothes on.

When we come by he walked over to the fence and looked at us like we was dirty or something. "Hi," he said. He talked city talk.

"Hidy." Brother said. "What's your name?"

"What's yours?" the boy said.

"Puddin'-tame," Brother said.

"Mine's Carol," the boy said.

"Carol. That's a girl's name." Brother laughed and I did too.

"Would you like to come over and play with me?" the boy said.

Play, he said. I bet he never did any work in his life.

"I'll let you ride my bicycle if you will," he said.

Me and Brother climbed over the fence.

"Where's the bicycle?" Brother said.

"On the porch."

We went over to the porch. The bicycle was a right new one. And he had a BB gun too. That kid's got all kinds of stuff.

He got the bicycle down from the porch and rode it around in the yard. It was painted green and the sun shined on the spokes of the wheels when he rode it and it was pretty. I wished I had one.

In a little while he got off and gave the bicycle to Brother. But Brother couldn't ride it, and it turned over with him. I tried it too, and it turned over with me.

"Let me try it again," Brother said.

The boy said, "No, you can't. You might break it."

He caught the pet crow again and we went over and set down under a big locust tree.

"That's a mighty fine crow you got there," Brother said. "Can I look at him?"

The boy said, "You can if you be careful not to hurt him. Grandfather is going to let me take him home."

"Sure not. I won't bother him," Brother said.

Brother put the crow on his shoulder and rubbed his feathers. "Say," he said. "I bet you don't know much about crows."

"Not much," the boy said. "Grandfather says they'll eat about anything, and if you split their tongues they'll talk."

"I can show you a little trick about crows," Brother said. "You want to see it?"

"Yes," the boy said.

Brother motioned to me to come and help him. He got a dynamite cap out of his pocket and a piece of fuse about as long as your finger. The boy came up real close and watched Brother stick the fuse in the cap and crimp the cap against a rock. He is the dumbest kid I ever seen.

"Here," Brother told me. "Hold his tail feathers up." He winked at me and I knew he had a good plan. Brother is a fine planner.

I held the tail feathers up and Brother poked the cap in the crow's bunghole.

"Got a match?" Brother said.

I give him a match and he struck it on his belt buckle.

"Now you watch," Brother said. "This'll learn you a lot about crows." He lit the fuse and pitched the crow up in the air.

The crow kind of fooled around for a minute, like he was getting ready to come down right in the middle of us. And me and Brother got out of the way. Then he looked around and saw that little ball of fire following him, spitting like a mad tom cat. He really got down to business then. I never seen a crow fly so fast in my life. He was aiming to go right off and leave that fire. But it caught up with him right over old man Crandel's barn. Blam! And feathers and guts went every which way. Where the crow had been was a little chunk of blue sky with a ring of smoke and black feathers around it.

Me and Brother took off over the fence. When we looked back the boy was still standing there with his mouth open, looking up at the place where the crow had busted. The tears was running down along side his nose. He looked sillier than hell.

II. BIRTH

After breakfast Daddy went to the barn, and me and Brother went to the garden and picked a mess of beans and dug a wash pan full of potatoes for dinner. Brother dug the potatoes with the grubbing hoe, and I picked them up and busted the dirt off of them and put them in the pan. I always like to dig potatoes. It's sort of a surprise. In the spring you plant one potato in the ground, and then

along in the summer you open the ground up and there's a whole hat-full of potatoes, all from that one little dried-up, dead-looking one you planted in the spring. And it's like a miracle. You can't tell how it happens, but you know it will—just as sure as you plant that one potato and it rains on it.

We took the beans and potatoes to the house and put them on the kitchen table. Mother was dressing a chicken on the back porch. She was singing. She sings all the time when she works, because she says it makes her happy to think about me and Brother eating what she fixes.

When she emptied the dish pan over the yard fence, the live chickens ran up to eat the guts of the dead one. They had a real scramble, fighting each other over their brother's guts. But chickens don't know who their brothers are, so you can just laugh and not get mad at them.

Then Daddy came up to the porch. He was sweating, and there was blood drying on his hands. He told mother to call Doc Lawrence, that the heifer was trying to have her calf. The heifer was in trouble, he said.

He turned around and started back to the barn. Mother went in the house; then she stuck her head back out the door and said, "You boys stay away from that barn. You've got no business out there."

We gave her plenty of time to get on the telephone, and went to the barn.

The heifer was lying on the floor of the driveway. We could see one of the calf's legs sticking out of her. She breathed real slow and loud.

"Hadn't you boys ought to be at the house?" Daddy said. Then he took a bucket out to the well and went to washing it, and we knew it was all right to stay.

We waited; and before long Doc's car came dusting through the gate and stopped in front of the barn.

Doc got out. "Well, hello boys," he said. "I see we got plenty of help."

Me and Brother said hello.

Doc grinned over at Daddy and said, "What's the trouble, Ralph?"

"Heifer calving, Doc. She can't have it and I can't help her."

Doc opened the trunk of his car and got out a pair of coveralls, and put them on over his regular clothes. He pumped some water into the bucket and washed his hands.

"What're you doing that for?" Brother said.

"Because they're dirty," Doc said. He flung the water off of his hands and started in the barn. "Well, let's have a look at her."

He kneeled down behind the heifer and gave a little pull at the calf's leg.

"It's turned wrong," he said. "It's trying to come out backwards. We'll have to turn it around."

He pushed the leg back inside her, then put his arm in and pushed. Then he put his other arm in, and pushed with one arm and pulled with the other one. He gritted his teeth and squinched his eyes up.

"Damn," he said. "If this ain't a tough one."

I sat down by the heifer's head and rubbed her nose. Her breath grunted out hot against my leg. I said, "Does it hurt you bad, Jeanie?"

Brother was leaning over, watching Doc. "What're you calling her Jeanie for?" he said. "She ain't got no name."

"Her name's Jeanie," I said.

Doc got the calf turned around and pulled the front legs out.

"At least we got it aimed right," he said.

He looped a chain around its ankles and pulled. Then Daddy caught hold of the chain and pulled, too. They sweated.

Her breath grunted out and blew a little clean place on the floor by my knee. Her eyes was rolled back in her head. It hurt her awful. I rubbed my hand on her face.

"The slut," Daddy said. "Got herself bred before she was a yearling."

Doc grinned and winked at Daddy. "I bet she's thinking it went in a damn sight easier than it's coming out."

They quit pulling and rested a minute, wiping the sweat off. Then Doc went to the car and got a block and tackle. They fastened one pulley to the calf's feet and the other one to the bottom of an upright. Daddy got a log chain out of the stripping room and they chained Jeanie's feet to an upright on the other side of the driveway. Then they pulled again.

The calf's legs came farther out, and then the head came out. After that it wasn't so hard any more. They pulled faster, and the calf slid out on the ground.

"No wonder," Doc said. "He's half as big as his mammy is."

They stood the calf up and dried him off with some sacks. Daddy unchained Jeanie's front feet so she could rest easier. She was awful tired.

But in a few minutes she heaved herself up and started licking the calf. He stood all quivery and drawed up in a knot and let her

lick him for a long time. Then he went around to suck. His back end could not follow his front end too good, but he made it and started sucking.

Doc laughed. "I don't blame him. I'd be hungry too." He started back to the well to wash his hands again. "He's all right now. When they come out hungry they're all right."

He finished washing his hands and took off the coveralls and pitched them back in the car.

"Send me a bill," Daddy said.

Doc grinned. "Don't worry."

Daddy said thanks a lot, and Doc got in the car and drove away.

Me and Brother helped Daddy gas up the tractor, and then went out behind the barn. It was getting pretty hot by then. The dust was thick on the bare ground around the gate, and our tracks caved in as quick as we made them.

The day before we had caught a black butterfly with all-colored spots on him. He was the biggest prettiest one I ever did see. We had him fastened in the top of a rotten post that was hollowed out inside. A flat rock was on top of the post to keep him in.

Brother lifted the rock up a little to see if he was still alive. And he was. I looked in, too, and he was setting there in the bottom of the hollowed-out place with his wings quivering.

I said, "Brother, you reckon his mother ain't looking for him?"

"I don't know," Brother said. "Do you think they care about each other?"

I looked back in the post at the butterfly. His wings was quivering like they was wanting to fly but he wouldn't let them because he knew it wouldn't do him no good. I said, "Yes, I think they care."

Brother knocked the rock off and he flew out. And his wings was shiny black in the sun.

III. DEATH

The day our mother died, Daddy cut down the rose bush by the front door.

Our mother had planted it and watered it with water from the well. She said when she saw it bloom in the spring it made her feel like winter never would come back again.

He came around the corner of the house with the double bit axe over his shoulder. And he cut the rose bush down; with the people watching in the front windows, and the preacher in his black suit standing on the front steps, watching.

He cut the rose bush down with one lick, all of its stems with one lick. He swung on the rose like it was a big tree. But he did not

stop when he cut the rose bush down. He kept swinging the axe into the ground where it had grown. And every lick he hit he drove the the axe head into the ground up to the helve.

Then he was sweating. His shirt was wet, and the sweat ran down his face around the corners of his mouth and dripped off of his chin. And the preacher was pulling on his shoulder, saying, "Don't Ralph. Come on in the house, Ralph."

And Daddy just kept swinging the axe into the ground, saying, "Ah . . . Ah," every time the axe went town. The preacher could not budge him. He just stood there, swinging the axe into the ground like he was cutting a big tree, with the people watching out the windows and the preacher pulling his shoulder, until he had chopped the stems of the rose bush up in little pieces. When he got done there was a big torn up patch of black dirt instead of green grass where the rose bush had been. Then he laid the axe over his shoulder again and went to the barn and put the axe away, and came back to the house and cleaned up and said hello to the people.

The preacher came out of the house again and told me and Brother we had better go upstairs and clean ourselves up. "You must be quiet," he said. "Your mother has gone up to Heaven."

"We know it," Brother said. "We knew it before you did."

We were going up the stairs and Mrs. Simmons opened the hall door and said, "Do you boys want me to help you get dressed up?"

Brother said, "No ma'am."

"Do you know where to find everything?" she said.

"Yes ma'am," Brother said.

We went upstairs to our room and poured some water in the wash pan. The sun came through the window curtains and made their shadow on the floor. When the wind waved the curtains the shadow on the floor waved.

"Let's both wash at the same time," Brother said.

I said all right, and we set the wash pan on the floor and kneeled down on each side of it to wash.

Brother squeezed the soap and it flew out of his hand and splashed water on me. I splashed water back at Brother. Brother laughed and I did too. Then Brother was snapping me with the towell, and I was sloshing water at him out of the wash pan.

I looked up and there was Daddy behind me. He caught me by the shoulders and held me clear off the floor and shook me. He shook me so hard I saw all of the room at one time. First it was me that was shaking. Then it looked like it was the room shaking. It looked like it was going to fall apart. He held me still and looked at me for a long time, then he put me down again and went out the door.

I sat on the floor and kept from crying until I started to feel better.

"Did it hurt?" Brother said.

"No," I said.

I got up, and we put our clothes on and slipped down the stairs and out the back door.

We went down the hillside to the hollow below the house and sat down. The sun was hot, and after we sat still a while we could hear the bees working in the clover up the hill behind us. And away in the woods a woodpecker beat on a dead tree.

"If Mother was here he wouldn't pick on me like that," I said. "I'll bet she wouldn't let him."

Then Brother started to cry.

I said, "Don't cry, Brother."

But he wouldn't listen. He got up and ran down the hollow, crying, until I could not hear him any more.

I laid back on the dry leaves and looked up at the sky. There was a buzzard floating up there, high over the woods. "Buzzard, you can't have my mother," I said. "Don't get my mother, buzzard."

After while he sailed away, and then there was just a cloud in the sky, and the woodpecker knocking the dead tree away in the woods.



The Fool

Ribboned in the lighted rags
of pilgrimage, gullible tramp
go ask them for a starpricked lodge
who driven by the hours crack
your joints on the ungiving ground,

and scrape the brown cakes in ditches
where your head lies like a wretch
deranged by birds in the winking wind.

The wicked pick your pocket flat
and stuff it up with hopes and jokes:
along the way you've had hard friends
but in your sleep the shining
anarchists of innocence.

ALFREDO GIOP DE PALCHI
Translated from the Italian
by SONA RAIZISS

Te Deum

Not loss, nor fear of loss, explain
The rocking ache of the severed limb
Any determinist may relax
With the indexed pain of the first-year dream
The airy memory he finds
Whistles through the impertinent mind.

If molded habits wind the wreath
Of blinding clarity, so the belief
That even death provides a charity
May take its honored place. Prepare
A patient face, the seemly choice,
Refuel the night lamp for your sudden voice.

JANE M. EVANS

The Odor of Judas

By WYAT HELSABECK

He was counting aloud the number of gulls on the red rooftops in the harbor. Suddenly he stopped counting, there were so many, and turned to Polly.

"I wish the examiner wouldn't come today," he said. "Every time I think I'm getting better, somebody comes to make me remember the other times."

"You're not getting better, not really," Polly said. "It's just something to say because you dread the examiner so much. You said you were getting better before you had the trouble in the oranges. Now it's rubber, but there's no difference, except there's a new examiner, a new face. Your feeling of hostility is the same."

"I've never dreaded anyone so much in my life," he said. "And I don't know why, exactly."

She was nervous, she was popping her knuckles. "Stop saying you don't know why. It wouldn't be so bad if you really didn't know. It was going on inside you long before you saw the dead soldier. That just brought it out."

From the honeymoon in Memphis to the job with the oranges, and later on the bridge at Binmaley, his life with Polly had been like his old unsettled life with David, a situation between two beetles, full of strong feelings and hostilities. He had let things drag on pretty well, he thought; but there were so many things he regretted, so many things that needed to be settled before he could feel free to make any more plans.

"I wasn't supposed to fight," he said. "None of us were. We were making cocoa under a tree full of big seeds that reminded me of home and maples, you know the way the seeds have wings in the fall. And then the soldier came. Somebody had to kill him. I don't see why it couldn't have been one of the others, though."

"That's a mean thing to say."

"No, it isn't. They didn't mind cruelty the way I did. One day I saw the same men torturing a straggler they'd brought back from the hills. I never could stand cruelty, or hostility of any kind. It's almost as if it has something to do with David, when I found out he didn't even want the things I'd saved up for him. I was terribly unhappy, and I was angry too."

"I wish you'd stop bringing it up," Polly said, popping her knuckles. The harsh sun coming in under the bamboo blinds made

her face look red, angry. "You'd better think what you'll say to the examiner when he comes."

"Damn the examiner," he said. "It doesn't matter what I say; it's what I feel. I feel terrible, having to involve you. I used to have to involve David like that, and he didn't understand, and at the end he didn't care any more. He said he didn't want any of the things I'd saved up for him."

"Don't," she said. "Please don't say things like that."

"I have to remember sometimes," he said. "I have to. It shouldn't bother you when I talk about David. We were very close."

"Please, don't," she said. "I just want to remember that I'm your wife now. Or don't you want to remember it?"

"Of course I want to remember. I don't know what it is about you that I'm most grateful for. I suppose it's the way you've always helped me conquer the hostilities."

"A woman needs more than gratitude. Is that all you feel for me?"

"Of course not. I feel more things for you than I've ever felt for any other woman."

"Please," she said. "I wish you wouldn't say that—not that way."

"Why not? I mean it."

"I just don't like it," she said. "It wouldn't make any difference if I tried to explain it to you."

He could not help remembering events and faces out of the other years, when he was trying so hard to get the important things settled. Sometimes things could change so quickly that there wasn't time to decide what one town or face or one accident had done to you before there were others to think about. One day the Judas trees were blooming all along the sidewalks in front of the candy-colored houses, and David was waiting under the awning with a young woman from Italy, and the next day there was sand and sand fiddlers and new soldiers with heavy shoes and chevrons. Maybe he would see David again, and maybe he wouldn't. Someday, after the great rains had come and gone in Gilli, making the land gentler after the dead soldiers, they would see the Judas trees again and the young woman from Italy who came down in April and seemed so necessary. It was not fair for things to change so quickly. He needed time to think, to interpret, to save things up for David.

He had always wanted to tell somebody about the idea and the fear of war when you were not supposed to do any of the fighting. But he always told people in bars, when he was drinking and feeling sorry for himself and trying to recreate fear that was not a drunk sort of fear. He had tried to tell David, but that was toward

the end, when David didn't care any more. The important thing was to tell things clearly, and then you waited for somebody to interpret what you had said and maybe ask a few questions. There was a full moon, and the beach was very white, and the tents of the soldiers were laid out in a straight line between the beach and the jungle. The high white grasses were full of beetles, and in the thousand towering trees of Toem he remembered the fireflies and the summer lightning. The soldiers were making cocoa over a little fire under a tree full of big seeds that came down like maple seeds. Someone was playing a harmonica, and someone in a tent was sending a message by Morse code. He was thinking what fine soldiers they really were after all, and yet not only in him but in the others also there was a safe feeling of knowing they did not have to be cruel, that somebody else was doing all the fighting up there where the artillery fire was mixing with the lightning. And that was the way it was supposed to be, the way duty had to be distributed. It was nobody's fault. And then suddenly there was a rustle in the young palm fronds, and there was the Japanese soldier coming at him through the firelight. He had seized his carbine from the tree trunk and fired straight into the soldier's face, and when he saw the body sprawling across his heavy shoes and the blood running off his feet into the sand, he was hypnotized by the idea and the fear that one cruelty could lead to another and maybe become a habit. Cruelty was the thing he had tried to avoid all his life. And when it was spring again and he saw the Judas trees, he realized how easy it is to be cruel and he knew he would have to have somebody who cared as much as he did and would stop him when he felt he was going to be cruel. He could not let his final harm or happiness depend on David, because David didn't care now, and men would not get that close to each other. They knew it was not right that way, and they would never get close enough. He could never explain to Polly about that, nor about the marriage and his need for closeness. It was better not to try to explain about things like that.

"I've got to have someone closer than David," he'd said to her. "You'll have to get closer than David, and I don't know if you can. That's the only way I can say it."

She'd been insulted and cried. "I don't see why you'd say a thing like that. Don't you believe a woman can love deeply enough?"

"I can't afford to guess at that," he'd said. "I want to believe in the love of women, yes. But you'll have to get closer than David."

"Let me try," she'd said. "Let me show you it's the only way."

There were flowers in a black bowl on velvet and something like a clotheshorse in a corner, standing up for the love of women. And a little dog named Dammit coughed all during the ceremony, and he thought the people blowing their noses were crying over

the idea and the fear of never being married, of never having the closeness. It was the month of the twin brothers, he remembered, when Polly had her first chance to show him about the love of women, and how that was the thing he needed, the thing to stop his hostile feelings. He couldn't tell her about all the ones he had discovered and tried and rejected and still the hostile feelings were there inside him. Before they reached Memphis on a slow train, before the honeymoon really began and he would know whether he had made a good decision or a poor one, they had chicken and cheese at a station and talked about oranges in Florida, something in a warm climate, some type of work with color and promise. And then, in the terrible hotel in Memphis they talked some too, but most of the time they didn't talk. The garbage dogs were sneezing all night down under an awning, and the usual sort of people who took rooms in the hotel were coming in drunk, singing obscene little songs at the doors. He remembered going into the hall in his robe to tell them they'd have to shut up, and the house detective took him by the collar, saying he had caused the disturbance. And when he felt the strength going crazy in his arms, and was aware of a strange yearning for the odor of the Judas trees, he had called Polly. There arose inside him a desire for something he did not fully understand but had always been aware of. She ran out into the hall in her pajamas while he was down on the floor on top of the man, choking him, and he felt her hand tugging at his arm. The hand was very gentle and very firm, reminding him of David's hand, and he could never forget after that how it felt. He would have killed the man if she hadn't stopped him. Explaining to her was the most tedious and difficult thing he had ever done with a woman, because he was married to her now and what was beginning now would probably go on always. Explaining to people had always made him feel sick. It was better if you didn't try to explain.

A feeling of savagery took hold of him, a longing to put on paint and feathers and go down to Gilli. He whacked at his paw-paw with a knife. The plate clattered.

"I know I've said this before," he said. "But maybe the feeling isn't permanent. I'm getting better. Maybe after a few months with the rubber colony, after I get a good dose of the sun and the scenery, I won't feel so hostile and I won't have to involve you. I like this sort of work. The climate's good for me."

"Maybe the doctors are all fools. That's what you mean, isn't it?"

"Maybe that's what I mean. I'm tired of explaining."

"About the soldier, or about the thing that was in you already? You were making cocoa under a green tree, and everybody else ran

from the soldier but you. And the odor of the Judas trees came to you all of a sudden, and your heart began pounding. You're not going to tell me about it again, are you?"

"I told you it wasn't the soldier, not just that. It was the idea and the fear of being cruel when I was trying so hard not to be. The other men were laughing and joking about it later, and patting me on the shoulder."

She began popping the bones in her knuckles again, not realizing it. "The doctors are all fools, though. You don't think nature or something solves things like that, do you?"

"Maybe that's what I think. I don't know, exactly."

"You're a fool if you think that," she said. "You ought to listen to the doctors. I can't stand to go through another scene like the one on the bridge. Or don't you want to remember that?"

As he jabbed his fork into the paw-paw, he remembered the scene on the bridge at Binmaley, in the Philippines. The war had been over for two years, and the unrotated troops were careless with love in the shallow rivers where the cogon grass was white and high. You could see them naked with the girls if you stopped on the bridge, and they would not stop what they were doing, even when they knew you were watching. The jeep he was driving had stalled in the middle of the bridge. He noticed his fingers were trembling when he began to fumble under the hood of the jeep, trying to fix whatever was wrong. Polly was bareheaded, and the sun was hot. She got out of the jeep and stood looking over the bridge, down at the water. The troops and the girls were in the high white grasses beginning to tassel. They wouldn't stop what they were doing. They didn't think anybody had any business stopping on the bridge in the sun like that. He saw Polly reel backwards and clutch the jeep's windshield for support. Her eyes were closed, and she was shaking. He thought it was the fierce sun on her head that was making her sick. "What is it?" he'd said. "What's wrong?" And then he looked over the bridge and there was a naked soldier standing on a rock, making obscene gestures at the bridge with his body. When he saw the soldier, his first impulse was to seize the carbine he carried in the jeep. And when the soldier saw the weapon aimed at his face, he began to run naked through the grass yelling, and the girls were waving their arms and shouting not to shoot. He would have shot the man, though, if he hadn't felt Polly's hand firmly clutching his arm. It was the most comforting, the most secure feeling he had ever known, having her hand on his arm like that. He would never forget how it felt.

He was startled by the cockatoo screeching and spinning on the bronze ring, objecting to the time, the room, the people.

Polly was there with him again. She said, "I can't make friends with the people here."

"I don't see why not."

"I made friends with the people in Winterhaven," she said. "Or don't you want to remember how it was in Winterhaven either?"

"Of course I remember. It was in the orange grove. The examiner of oranges was the worst I'd ever seen. He was about to start a riot at the warehouse. There was a rifle standing against a tree. I was going to kill the man if you hadn't stopped me. I felt your hand on my arm and knew everything was going to be all right. I knew you cared. Wasn't I grateful enough? I thought you'd know about that."

"That's not important," she said.

"What is, then?"

"It was the people I'd made friends with. After they found out you were capable of killing a man, they wouldn't come near me. They began leaving me out of all the important things."

"Everybody's capable of killing a man, even you. Do you want friends like that? Do you think they're worth bothering with?"

"It's the dignity. Fear of indignity is as bad as fear of cruelty. David knew about that, didn't he?"

He remembered she had been drinking at a party the night before the incident in the oranges, and she was kissing people she wouldn't have kissed. It was like people who have to get drunk before they can have sex the way they want it. When she'd stopped him from attacking the man, her grip on his arm was a little less firm, her will to stop him a little less resolute. It was only because of the drinks, though, and that's all there was to it. He'd had to take her for a long drive through the open country, to let the sea wind get the kisses of the fickle people off her lips for awhile, the people who didn't care. And he kept saying it was only because of the drinks.

"You don't want to understand how I feel," she said. "You want everything to work out the way you planned it at the beginning, before anything else happened to change things. You close your eyes when things start changing."

"I don't think I'm that way."

"You're thinking about one thing, and I'm thinking about another. You'll never try to understand about the dignity. Men never do."

I understand, all right, he thought. But to some people there were more important things than dignity. Discovery, trial, and then the final selection of one out of all the rest, the one that cared most. He remembered how it was in Gilli during the war, when

there were no white women and the native ones began to look good. There was a long looping line of soldiers leading to one of the bamboo houses, and he had slept all night under a weapons carrier, thinking about going in but never going. He remembered also riding all night on the slow trains through the snowstorms with David during spring vacation, and later drinking and sleeping with the women they were discovering and trying and rejecting in the cold rooms with the bibles. And most of the time there was something like a clothestree in a corner, standing up for the joy of the final selection. The sneezing of the garbage dogs under the white awnings of the fur shop, and the windows radiant with lights and sequins. But he could never explain about such things to Polly. He would never even try.

She began bawling out the houseboy; she slapped and pushed him until he dropped the breakfast dishes and ran out through the kitchen. Through the open bamboo blinds you could see the humiliated little black boy up in the coconut tree.

After he'd pouted for awhile, Chris came down out of the tree. He stayed in the yard until late in the afternoon, and when she called him he was asleep in the front seat of the station wagon. Her mood was a little better. She had him bringing great bunches of fresh hibiscus for the center table. Maybe she wanted the room to look nice when the examiner came; he didn't know.

"Don't ever drive your pigs to a poor market," he told her.

"What?"

"It's something we used to say when we were afraid we'd made a bad choice, David and I," he said. "Just an expression."

"What does it mean?"

"Anything you want it to mean," he said. "Just anything."

"Pigs to a poor market," she echoed, thinking about what he'd said and what he meant.

He looked out the window, watching waves of heat rise from the roofs of the red houses in the harbor. There were no gulls, no fish.

"You said we'd go to Australia for awhile, before the hard work starts at the rubber colony," she said. "There are only two weeks left. When are we going?"

"I don't know," he said.

"Why can't we leave now? You're in charge here. Whatever you say goes."

"I don't know. I've got to talk to the workers, for one thing."

"Why?"

"I've had warnings from several of my overseers. The workers I recruited in Gilli are planning something. I've got to talk to them. I don't know yet just what I'll say. It's the hardest thing in the world to think of things to say to people who work for you or mean something to you."

"Just tell them, pigs to a poor market," she said. "You said it could mean anything you wanted it to."

"I shouldn't have used the expression. It belongs to another time, to other people. It isn't ours."

"No. It fits," she said. "Pigs. That's what the villages smell like, pigs and old outhouses. But I suppose you'll say they don't. Are you going to subject me to the smells of the villages again?"

"You can sit in the car. I've got to talk to the workers."

"If you don't, they'll go back to their villages, won't they? They'll put on paint and feathers and throw bones out of a cup for a reason, and leave you to go to the devil."

"I hate having to involve you."

"Don't, then. I don't think I can stand to go through with it again."

"I've got to have somebody there who cares," he said. "You think this time's going to be like all the other times."

"Yes. Another attack on David, because he wasn't like you."

"No. I'll show you. We'll take the station wagon and go down to the village. We'll rehearse the whole thing, so you'll feel better about it."

"You're going to subject me to this sort of thing for the rest of my life," she said. "No matter how you say it, that's what you mean. What makes you think I care? You said David cared at first, and then didn't care."

"I wish you wouldn't say that. I want you to leave David out of this."

He was serious about the rehearsal; he thought it would help.

"It won't do any good. Nothing will," she said. "There's no use going."

"You don't mean that," he said.

He went out through the kitchen, and a few minutes later he was blowing the horn in the station wagon and calling Polly. She ran a comb through her hair a few times, not really caring how she looked, and then went down and flopped wearily into the station wagon beside him. They had to stop for a convoy of army trucks; the soldiers began whistling at Polly, and she turned her head away, thinking of the naked soldier running through the high white grasses from death under the bridge.

The birds of Balagoma, the parakeets and the paradise birds, were sweeping over the tangerine trees and the wild limes by the river in sheets of dreadful color. The young wallabies played out where it was clean and sunny, the way he had seen them playing before the war was over, away from the high white grasses that were full of dead soldiers.

He drove for a long time along the river where the people from the villages came to bathe in the evening. The wood doves were making noises that could make happy people despondent, and some little boys were there at the river now, screaming and splashing in the swift water. He turned west and then south again and circled the swamps of Papua, where a Japanese plane was sticking up out of the mud, and there must have been a hundred wading birds standing there in the sun on the broken wings. The next moment the station wagon was in the mountains, and there below them, squatting like cranes on their long wooden legs over the ocean, were the absurd little bamboo houses of the natives. With an odd feeling between nausea and indifference, not knowing exactly what the feeling was or why it should occur to him now, he remembered spending the night in one of the houses when he was drinking to the end of the war and cruelty, and wondered if any of the children he had seen playing at the river could be his.

To Polly this was just like all the other villages in the world. The emaciated brown dogs were not so different from the garbage dogs in Memphis; all the village meant to her was an accumulation of indignities that seemed inevitable wherever men and women tried to provoke and aggravate in each other the emotions of beetles. The station wagon had sputtered all the way from the river, and now it stalled on the edge of the mountain. While he was peering under the hood, a native woman was passing, and she stopped and gazed through the window at Polly. She was naked from the waist up and was nursing a pig at one breast and a baby at the other. And everyone knew, without being there, how the soldiers were during the war when there were no white women. It was better not to have seen it, not to have to think about it. She closed her eyes and her head dropped back on the hot leather seat. The same things were about to happen that had always happened, and she was wishing she would never have to go through with this sort of thing again, wishing somebody would tell her what to do, so that it would never have to happen again.

Under the wheel again, he looked at her sadly. "You make me feel cruel sometimes, even you," he said. "I've never been cruel to you, have I?"

"Maybe people don't know when they're being cruel," she said, wearily. "I don't care. Take me home. Please—just take me home, that's all."

"We'll go through the whole thing, just the way it's to be tomorrow, maybe for the last time. I want you to feel better about it."

"No," she said.

When they stood in their own absurd little bamboo house again, it was late in the evening; you could hardly make out the red houses on the islands in the harbor. The houseboy was teasing the cockatoo. He had come to know every little mannerism Polly had cultivated to let the world know how unhappy she was. He studied her face for a moment, timidly, then went and whispered something in the man's ear and quickly ran out through the kitchen.

"Chris says the examiner called again," he said. He slumped into a chair by the window and let his head fall limp against the high back. "I know he's inevitable. But I've never dreaded anyone so much in my life." He began rubbing his arm. "You remember how it was with the one in Florida. We were all right until he came along. I know we were, and then we had to start all over again, and things were harder. Nobody could ever make me believe it was anything either of us had done to spoil things. It was his fault. I know it was."

"I'm tired," Polly said. She went into her room and shut the door.

He went to the window and tried to see the ships that usually came quietly in at night, all lighted up, bringing people up from Australia to watch the wallabies and count the dead soldiers all over again.

There was a strong smell of hibiscus in the air; it was not like the odor of Judas. In his hands, in his mind and the struggling of his heart, were all the things he had been saving up for David, and they were still piling up inside him, more and more. He could not free himself of the pain they caused him; he could not give them to anyone else.

The cockatoo began spinning on the bronze ring; its screaming made him remember the jays in the Judas trees, and something inside him was screaming also, demanding a chance to go back in time and start things again, in a way that would be easier. He saw the lights of an automobile coming from the harbor, and he knew it was the examiner. He went to the bedroom door and called Polly.

He heard her drop something, a hair brush or a comb, and there was a noise within the room that sounded like all the little things on the dresser being swept away. The door opened, and she was with him again, her face looking white and older.

"I can't talk to him alone," he said. "I just can't. I've never felt such hostility toward anybody in my life—except at the last, when I knew David didn't care the way I did." He began rubbing his arm and looking down at his shoes. "You wouldn't believe it if I told you all the things I'd saved up for David. I was never so angry in my life as when I found out he didn't want them."

She grew very stiff, so that there was no movement about her except the popping of her knuckles. He wanted to hear her say something; he was afraid she was going to fall over like a dead soldier, her body was so rigid. She stared at him for a moment, but there was nothing in her face, no sign of emotion at all. He could not know, he could not imagine, the struggle that was going on in her heart, because in his heart the struggling was so different. She went into her room and shut the door.

He tried to think of other faces, better faces, David's coming first. And then he remembered that David did not care at the last. He could not really exist any more, except when the slow trains were spinning their wheels in the snow, except when it was spring somewhere else and the places where they went were unbelievably clean and beautiful places and smelled good.

He did not realize the examiner was there in the room with him, until the cockatoo began to scream and spin again, objecting to another face to look at in the tight little house. He could feel no relief, he was receptive to nothing but a growing, monstrous hostility; he could release himself to nothing in the room. It seemed to him it was a mockery the way the examiner was standing in front of him, staring. He could feel no relief. Suddenly the savagery took hold of him again, and he wanted to put on paint and feathers and go down to Gilli and find a woman with leprosy and sleep with her. He began kicking the examiner in the face and in the stomach; he was jabbing blindly at his ribs with the hard butt of the carbine, swinging it back and forth against his head and his cheekbones. Blood began coming out between the terrified man's teeth, and it ran down through his fingers when he tried covering his face with his hands. He wanted to keep on kicking the man in the face, but he was running out of breath; the strength was going out of his legs. He saw the examiner doubling up in agony on the floor, and he stopped the kicking and looked away. Still he felt no relief; he could not release the struggle, the desire for something he had never understood but had always been aware of. He didn't think he could stand to look at the face again and see what he had done to it.

He could not resist the desire to look, hoping for relief. There was nothing in the face that could help him. The face was like everyone he had ever hated and wanted to punish, and like everyone he had ever felt close to. There was a growing panic in the dry muscles of his throat, an unbearable yearning for the odor of the Judas trees and the taste of thyme.

Daedalus: To the lady from Gortyn

This is abides
abide thereby.
Gray sky is
blue above;
who can not give
his Love his all
may give his
All his love.

Your kisses sting
upon my mouth
without your
breath to balm it;
whom Mystery
has overwhelmed
might rend his
heart to calm it.

A good God bye
by God be good
for I can
bye no longer;
whose wont denies
his appetite
must learn to
live from hunger.

VIN CASSIDY

Child's Heart

By NEIL BYER

The Saturday mornings of children have a way of sleeping until say mid-morning. By then each child has discovered the new experience which makes his day alive, or has re-discovered the old.

It was so at least for Thomas. Sprawled across the big living room chair in front of the window, he held almost omnivorous eyes on the narrow world outside. There was not much activity: occasionally a person near his own age, or twos or threes, would skitter by, their day having already begun; occasionally something more personal, as far as he was concerned to remind him that already it was October, winter almost here—a bare branch rocking and whistling in the high wind or a starling pecking aimlessly in the hardening sod of the yard. He contrived to appear casual as he turned frequently to look at the clock, although he was alone in the room. Between looking, his mind urged on its hands, for when it abruptly stroked nine-thirty, he could go to meet Beth. By now his tension was so great that, in the envisioning, it seemed that there would be something final just in the meeting. And oh what, when the whole story was told, the limepit shown and its mystery communicated.

The pit itself valiantly fought its abandonment, struggling against encroaching vegetation even when all men considered it a thing past and gone. To most people it was just an eyesore and a landmark. Whatever, it lay there keeping its own counsel, reflecting a brilliant white under the sun, ghostly under the moon, sucking to a quiet and liquid death the things that tried to violate it and soon making them a part of its own fossil age.

The first freedom and the first loneliness Thomas had found had been his Saturday mornings, sitting on the shoreline of the limepit, just sitting. Or sometimes he would lie on his back and look endlessly into the sky until he could sense the fresh air of the high heavens, but lie at least with one ear tuned to the gray white liquid murk of the pit as it lapped gently against the shore so near him. Again he would throw something into the pit itself to watch it sink and know it was gone just then.

There is no knowing when the old limepit came at first to be a part of Thomas' Saturday morning vigil, for after he discovered it, it was a long while with him beyond intellection a secret. And it was finally only to Beth that he must dumbly offer the secret.

Thomas was twelve and in the eighth grade when he found Beth

and began cautiously admitting her point by point to the details and realness of his world, analyzing painstakingly after each secret given.

One day in the spring he had shown an old thing to her: he had led her through the storm sewer, the two-mile long, cylindrical tunnel running from the absolute north end of town to the south, where it gave off onto the river. Mostly there wasn't much to it, but after heavy rains or when a big snow melted the gush of the water through it was deep and swift. All of his friends knew it was there; most of them had been through it. But he knew of none who had made the passage at the height of a summer storm. He had. Then he had fought against the rush of brown waters, as high as his chest, and had won, emerging on the river end, very wet and tired, but confident even over the great, brown, angry and almost sea of river that the sewer discharged into. He knew the sewer well.

On the excursion with Beth through the tunnel, he first knew her as he wanted to. At least it was enough for him then. She was silent for the most part, as he was, this in a setting where others, he knew, gave way adandonedly to the shoutings and strange sounds which in the long tunnel produced strange echoes.

She learned quickly how to run three quick steps on one side, then three quick steps on the other, of the sewer stream, just too wide that day to allow walking beside it in the great tube and just too wide to straddle comfortably. They ran close together, Thomas ahead, and straightway their footfalls struck the same rhythm, and for a while this cadence, spiralling on until lost in the mystery not yet reached, was only sound. But just after they had fairly started, they had disturbed a bat. He was prepared, because of his explicit knowledge of the sewer, both for bats and subsequent sharp crash of wings when they were disturbed. At the first noise he stopped short, one foot to each side of the stream, instinctively covering his face and head with his arms. Nearly in the same instant, he felt Beth press close to him from behind. He turned and held her clumsily for as long as it took him to realize that the danger had passed before he had protected her. He in his compassion, she in her fear, remained huddled together still, mindless of the water in which they now were standing. Her protection, too, will come of knowledge, and he told her of the need to keep bats from the hair. Bats would only bump harmlessly against you if they found they could not nest in your hair. Very soon, as he talked, he sensed that any fear had passed from Beth, and he knew there was no need nor use in holding her. Nothing else will frighten her, he thought. But he would not tell her about sewer gas, stories of which distrubed him, but which itself he never had been able to discover. After they started again, they stopped only once, resting while he explained that the heavy stream of water cascading down

from a pipe in the top of the tunnel was discharge from the ice plant, which they now were under. He anticipated her gasp when, after the last turn, daylight, the end of the storm sewer, appeared, seeming match-head size in the distance. Probably he had gasped the first time: it after all signified relief and accomplishment and perhaps somewhat of dismay at knowing that the experience of the sewer was nearly finished. Now of course he no longer gasped, but none the less, he inevitably lived through the same emotional intricacies which Beth's present gasp gave substance to. In a half hour they were at the end, but the union born of their experience seemed profound, and they held hands and walked up the unused road from the river's edge to a main street which oriented them. Then home.

Another time, after the school picnic at Oak Creek, they had straggled off from the others, most of whom went home in twos or threes, and had plunged along through the thickets and bushes which flanked the creek. When certain they were alone, they had sat together on a log, remaining silent for the most part. Each finally, out of a great need to do something, had relieved himself in front of the other, and that was a secret shared which bore down on the conscious and consciousness of each of them. Thomas had instigated the doing, wanting to make certain that there was no silent area in which Beth and he had not joined together. He sensed that whatever and wherever a lack of this sort might be, it must be as fearsome a thing to her as to him. Discreetly complaining loudly at first that he'd be back in a minute, leading her on to tell him not to go away and leave her there, he had ended by going behind a tree for the necessary few moments. But Beth had followed suggesting that she must, too, but that this must always be their secret. And he was proud of so precious a thing.

Other unfoldments came in succession, Thomas remaining the master and showing the parts of his heart which he chose. It was almost as if he were building something, this love and secret pride.

Throughout the summer he fashioned carefully, bringing their relationship through all the flaccid days of that time of year and through the hard press of the new school year's beginning. Now he reasoned that because he loved so much it was time to show Beth the lime-pit.

From nine twenty-five on he had no thought but to watch the clock, to watch the large hand move to cover the six. For nine-thirty would mark the beginning of the final embracement, he was certain; thus the half-hour stroke became part of the situation. Onto what plains under what gleaming sun, over what high and before impassable peaks, what forbidden recesses and secret places—what of these, until this stroke, remained the knowledge of God, but by this stroke

all of this would begin to become known to him, and his Saturday morning would come alive.

Despite his fixed stare, his concentration and anticipation, the hollow sound of nine-thirty made him start. Thereafter it was but a moment until he had slipped into his jacket and set off for the schoolyard, fumbling in his jacket pockets for his gloves as he ran. Four blocks to the schoolyard. Six blocks from there to the pit.

He arrived before Beth did. The clock in the school tower showed ten and after when he made her out coming his way.

They met, and he took her hand. For until now she had not known of the pit.

She matched his pace, but she chattered aimlessly for a block or two. Then she fell silent.

They crossed the railroad tracks and in a few hundred yards stood at the very edge of the pit. In the deep morning quiet, the milky lime lapped against the pit's edge. And Thomas waited in silence for Beth to know.

But instead, quite abruptly, she announced that she must go. Before she even understood the pit, Thomas thought. Vaguely he said goodbye and she was gone.

It not being a time for meditation, he squatted very close to the pit's edge, removed both of his gloves, and rather methodically laved both his hands in the liquid lime.

Shortly now Thomas would hurry home to wash his hands clean, to wash away the sting of the lime, to doctor his hands in the best secret way he could. For he knew that many Saturdays die with this one, but not that in some ways it was an undistinctive death.



"Twas that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlowe, now at least fifty years ago. And the milk-maid's mother sung an answer to it which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days. They were old fashioned poetry, but choicely good, I think much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age."

—Izaak Walton

The Passionate Shepherd's Reply To His Love

Come love with me and prove me young,
Hurling my strength on your feathered tongue,
Pouring such glory as his leap tears
From flanks of salmon in the pause of weirs.

Let earth swell its breast to flocks
And pines root in cloven rocks
And the argumentative river churn
Its lips of bank and teeth of stone,

Let all signs babble that will
Of a long loving, but a chill.
Ours is a tongue, an earth, a pine
Paid in glad heat. And as for Time,

Your eyes give graceful yesses as
The water-circling willow trees
From which twin liquid suns there spills
A sunrise on twin marble hills.

Such visions last as long as we
Have need of them. If you in me
Find equal scenes that may you move,
Then we will live and get and love.

ROBERT BELOOF

To Patrick

You are very young and telling the young
To cherish youth is empty, but I speak
Of the sentences of fear pronounced
Like coy thunder on an evening plain.

You cannot heed now, but soon myths
Will be needed: your Christ evaporated,
Your love dispersed in a vacuum,
Your eyes raw from willing tears to stifle

Consuming fires. A phoenix becomes
Necessary as light, fitfully held
To the chilly skin like a first
Surrendering girl, like palpable hope

Or an amiable pet to be stroked
And kept near. There are no hexes
For the gray witch who plagues our days;
Face that, and love comes back again.

But you are more than young and telling
The unseared heart of fire is vain
As Noah's flood in Sunday's school
Or the thunder that to you means rain.

HAROLD GRUTZMACHER



Hemingway and Vanity Fair

By C. HUGH HOLMAN

"In Hemingway, the emotions that are not there are a silence underlying all sound, a lack which, once felt, constantly gives poignancy to the whole," John Peale Bishop has said. In Hemingway's first major novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, the poignancy of this "missing all" defines the unexpressed theme: the moral vacuum in which the expatriate veterans of the First World War were living. It is the intensity of this sense of loss—a loss of love, of health, of meaning, and most disastrously of all, of hope—that gives point and strength to the story of the emasculated Jake Barnes and the emotionally trapped Lady Brett Ashley.

As Hemingway himself has reminded us, "you'll lose it if you talk about it," and it is dangerous to conceptualize this unexpressed context in his novel. Yet, recognizing that danger, we may say that in one significant sense, what has been lost is the traditional religious view of life and man, a view that gives life meaning.

In this meaningless world Hemingway's characters move with frenetic energy, attempting with strident gaiety to impose upon their world, if not value, at least pleasure. And they drive themselves, with all their laughter, their drinking, their love-making, closer and closer to lonely, disintegrating despair.

The parallel between this story and that of the Fisher King and his impotence in Eliot's *The Waste Land* has often pointed out. I believe that the novel also has parallels to the concept of *Vanity Fair*, and that those parallels illuminate certain aspects of Hemingway's view of his world.

The concept of *Vanity Fair*—a frantic, materialistic, gay but joyless search for pleasure in defiance of recognized values of life—is fairly wide-spread in the world's literature. Almost certainly it finds its origins in the book which Herman Melville called "the fine hammered steel of woe," *Ecclesiastes*, the Biblical book whose author declares, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"

In several obvious ways, *The Sun Also Rises* invites comparison with *Ecclesiastes*. Its title comes from the Biblical book; it bears an

epigram from it, an epigram underscoring the transience of man and the enduring quality of the earth:

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever . . . The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose . . . The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the river come, thither they return again.

Hemingway wrote to his editor Maxwell Perkins that the point of the book was "that the earth abideth forever," that he had "a great deal of fondness and admiration for the earth, and not a hell of a lot for my generation," and that he cared "little about vanities."

Taking his pictures of the Boulevard Montparnasse and the fiesta at Pamplona as variations on Vanity Fair, as Carlos Baker has suggested that they may be taken, I shall attempt to set them against the pictures of Vanity Fair drawn by John Bunyan and by William Makepeace Thackeray.

In 1678 John Bunyan, a dissenting preacher lodged in Bedford Prison for preaching "the truth" in the post-Commonwealth world of the Stuart Restoration, looked from the prison cell of his sainthood upon a world where vanity had run mad—a materialistic, lecherous, drunken, giddy world of lost values and depraved conduct. And he imprisoned this vision of his world in parts of his allegory of Christian's pilgrimage from earth to Heaven, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

After Christian and Faithful emerge from the wilderness, they find themselves in an ancient town called Vanity, which has a fair of which Bunyan says:

. . . at this fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And, moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues . . . thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearers, and that of a blood-red colour.

Unmistakably here is an allegory in which the orthodox Protestant views of man and religion are brought to bear upon materialism and vanity. Man becomes a citizen of Bunyan's evil city only when he defies a clear religious tradition and is false to an accepted truth. Salvation from the inner corrosion of selfishness is to be found in Evangelist's words. There is a knowable God who overrules the worst efforts of "the Lord Carnal Delight, the Lord Luxurious, the Lord Desire of Vain Glory, my old Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, and all the rest . . . the nobility [of] our noble prince

Beelzebub." Faithful, who dies under scourging in the prison, "straightway was carried up through the clouds, with sound of trumpet, the nearest way to the celestial gate." And Bunyan tells us that "he that overrules all things having the power of their rage in his own hand, so wrought it about that Christian for that time escaped them and went his way; and as he went he sang."

In 1847 and 1848 William Makepeace Thackeray looked out upon a world of selfishness and unhappiness and bodied it forth in an extensive novel which he called *Vanity Fair*. His purposes, like Bunyan's were moral. In a letter to his mother, on July 2, 1847, he wrote:

Of course you are quite right about Vanity Fair and Amelia being selfish . . . Don't you see how odious all the people are in the book (with the exception of Dobbin)—behind whom all there lies a dark moral I hope. What I want is to make a set of people living without God in the world (only that is a cant phrase) greedy pompous mean perfectly self-satisfied for the most part . . .

But Thackeray is very much a citizen of Vanity Fair, and toward himself and his fellow vain ones he takes a tolerantly mocking air. In the prologue to the novel, he defines his attitude:

As the Manager of the Performance sits before the curtain on the boards, and looks into the Fair, a feeling of profound melancholy comes over him in his survey of the bustling place. There is a great quantity of eating and drinking, making love and jilting, laughing and the contrary, smoking, cheating, fighting, dancing, and fiddling. . . . Yes, this Vanity Fair; not a moral place certainly; nor a merry one, though very noisy. . . . the general impression is one more melancholy than mirthful.

In the nineteenth chapter, in one of his hundreds of authorial interruptions, he says:

. . . the bustle, and triumph, and laughter, and gaiety which Vanity Fair exhibits in public, do not always pursue the performer into private life . . . O brother wearers of motley! Are there not moments when one grows sick of grinning and tumbling, and the jingling of cap and bells? This . . . is my amiable object—to walk with you through the Fair . . . come home . . . and be perfectly miserable in private.

And he brings his records of vanity, selfishness, and frenetic despair to a conclusion with this comment: "Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!* Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? or, having it, is satisfied?"

Clearly the simple physical facts of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* are similar to those of Bunyan's. The difference between the two writers is chiefly in the attitudes they take toward Vanity Fair. The Puritan preacher had called, like an Old Testament prophet, for the vain, materialistic world to repent; and he had been horrified by the evil which it did to others, as symbolized by Christian and Faithful.

Thackeray's prophecies seem at least partially self-directed; the evil of which he seems most aware is one which Vanity Fair does to itself; and it is upon his "fellow wearers of the motley" that he lavishes his cynical sympathy. Bunyan had judged Vanity Fair by a pattern of absolute religious belief. Thackeray's judgment is relative and ethical, not absolute and religious. Although there are significant contiguous qualities about them, Bunyan's standard of Godlessness is heavenly in its orientation and Thackeray's standard of selfishness is earthly in its orientation. Bunyan views the sins of a group who defy God; Thackeray looks at himself and his fellows as they futilely struggle to realize unsatisfiable dreams.

Thackeray's world of Vanity Fair is discouraging, despairing, hopeless, vain and empty in its materialistic values, hollow and frightening in its spiritual sterility. Yet it is not inescapable; its denizens are there because of moral failures of their own; and they may win their ways out by moral triumphs. Thus the ultimate measure of Thackeray's Vanity Fair is the traditional moral-ethical system of values, lost but still very real and capable of being refound. What these people must learn is humility. Writing to his mother, Thackeray had also said:

Dobbin & poor Briggs are the only 2 people with real humility as yet. Amelia's is to come, when her scoundrel of a husband is well dead with a ball in his odious bowels; when she has had sufferings, a child, and a religion—But she has at present a quality above most people whizz: LOVE—by wh. she shall be saved. Save me, save me too O my God and Father, cleanse my heart and teach me my duty.

Ernest Hemingway, former volunteer ambulance driver on the Italian front, newspaper correspondent, writer, and American expatriate, in Spain and later in the capital of "all the sad young men," Paris, set down in 1925 a picture of one group of postwar people. He showed them at their standard pleasure-seeking activities in Paris, and then he moved them to a Spanish fiesta at Pamplona. He gave them plot unity by selecting a group that revolved around Lady Brett Ashley, whose first fiancé, the true love of her life, like Catherine Barkley's fiancé in *A Farewell to Arms*, has been killed in the war; whose second husband is evil and cruel; and whose lover, Jake Barnes, is an emasculated war casualty. She has become an alcoholic nymphomaniac. The action of the book is shaped by her affair with Robert Cohn, "not one of us," and its culminating aftermath, an affair with a fine young bullfighter, Pedro Romero.

The spiritual malaise of Thackeray's people has been intensified into a brooding disease, almost a death, of the spirit. Hemingway defines this illness in a brief passage which illustrates his incomparable ability to make the simplest physical facts mean two things and

imply a whole realm of unexpressed meaning. Early in the novel, Jake has picked up a French prostitute:

She touched me with one hand and I put her hand away.

"Never mind."

"What's the matter? You sick "

"Yes."

"Everybody's sick. I'm sick, too."

In the opening sequences of the novel, Jake, Brett, and their crowd are in Paris participating in the endless spree. Everything is seen through Jake's eyes, and the imagery is blurred and hazy. Physical objects, usually sharp in Hemingway's writing, have an alcoholically uncertain quality. The streets are wet with rain and they shimmer unstably. The air is intense, filled with noise, almost palpably feverish. Brett, the symbol of insatiable emptiness, dominates everybody's thinking and feeling.

Then Jake and his friend Bill Gorton leave for Spain and the fiesta. Suddenly the air is clean and clear and cold. The mountains are sharply etched across the horizon. The men fish in waters almost incredibly clear. The frenzy and the heat and the disease seem far away. A physical measuring stick—the natural, cool, calm earth—has been imposed upon the Paris group. And the imagery has sharpened to the point where a bracing, healthy sharpness seems almost tangible on the pages.

Then Jake and Bill move on to Pamplona and the fiesta and are joined by Brett and her gang. Once more the drunken spree gets underway. Again the images grow frenzied and then muddled and at last become a desperate alcoholic haze. Here though a symbol of order is imposed. It is Pedro Romero, a young bullfighter of great promise. His disciplined life, his youthful health, his passion for his profession, the graceful control with which he moves—all serve as standards to measure the expatriates by. He is, seemingly, the closest thing possible for man to that natural, cool, calm earth of the middle section of the novel.

Then he becomes Brett's lover. Almost with despair his friends watch him begin a course which will sap from him the spiritual strength which makes him potentially great. Then Brett herself senses what he is and what she is and sends him away almost unharmed. Again the point is implied in a dialogue, this time between Brett and Jake:

"... You know I feel rather damned good, Jake."

"You should."

"You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch."

"Yes."

"It's sort of what we have instead of God."

"Some people have God," [Jake] said. "Quite a lot."

"He never worked very well with me."

"Should we have another Martini?"

Earlier Hemingway has carefully stated the essentially religious nature of Jake, who is like Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*, a young man who understood and longed for the peace of the Priest's "homeland", but who was condemned by his world never to go there. Brett, as Carlos Baker has pointed out, is in sharp contrast. She is never at home in a church and cannot pray even when she wants to. She is pure pagan. The day before the fiesta of San Fermin at Pamplona, Jake "went to church a couple of times, once with Brett. She said she wanted to hear [him] go to confession, but [he] told her that not only was it impossible, but it was not as interesting as it sounded, and, besides, it would be in a language she did not know."

But if Brett represents a people who do not know the language of religion (for almost certainly Hemingway intends the double meaning), it must be said, too, that Jake knows only the language and not the meaning. Like Frederic Henry, what he has is an understanding of what religion has meant to other people and a nostalgia for that certainty for himself, but he lives in a condition where it does not touch his problems at all, except in incidents like that just described, where it serves to define them.

Hemingway uses a natural order—the cool, sweet earth—and a strong, disciplined, and healthy person—Pedro Romero—in something like the same way that Bunyan used his religious absolutes and Thackeray used his ethical unselfishness. For each of the earlier writers, though in decreasing strength, there existed an external system of values by which man might be judged. For Hemingway, God has been replaced by the purely personal act—Brett's renunciation of Romero, a very primitive kind of personal morality, is what she has in place of God.

Thackeray's people, Hemingway's are all within Vanity Fair, and almost despairingly so. As Mike Campbell says, "This is all awfully amusing, but it's not too pleasant. It's not too pleasant for me." But Thackeray's people are there because of their own acts, and by suffering they can learn the way out. Hemingway's people are there because of suffering, and there is no exit from their Vanity Fair. His novel records how two people live with their world by recognizing its nature and imposing their own personal codes upon it, however helpless they may be in every other respect. Brett may not change herself in any way, but in renouncing her hold on Romero she does remain faithful to an inviolable personal being, however painful the faithfulness may be. Jake, that stoic who weeps alone at night over the lost Brett and himself, maintains his own controlled

response. He, too, remains faithful to an inviolable personal self. The book ends on this note:

"Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together."

... The car slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me.

"Yes," I said. "Isn't it pretty to think so?"

Hemingway's *Vanity Fair* is an Existential one. Men live in this hollow world, not because they defy God as the citizens of Bunyan's city of Vanity do, nor because they are willfully and cynically selfish as the citizens of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* are, but because they are in a jungle where God is a word in a forgotten language and only in the self is value to be found. Their position is hardly tragic, but it is certainly pathetic. Theirs is the Existential dictum to give it personal meaning by facing its meaninglessness with dignity and poise. The classic virtue of humility has been replaced by self-assertion.



The Wars of Love

The wars of love are ancient, never-ending:
the clash at night within the well-lit room
that shadows forth the old hostilities
cannot resolve the childhood of dilemma.

The too solicitous searching of the heart,
the rude rejoinder on the midnight stair:
such intimate encounters with the wound
revive the cradle of the first defeat.

The perfect friendship is perfection marred,
the quarrel is original in the self:
and combatants waking from a bed of fault
ascend the crutches of accustomed day.

EDWARD WATKINS

Russell Kirk:

Quixote Revisited

By ED YODER

Windmill-tipping is abroad in the land again, this time under the aegis of the New Conservatism. Foremost prophet and leader of the new political school is a young historian from Michigan, Russell Kirk, who traces his ancestry back to the Mayflower pilgrims of 1623 and who believes that "the conservative, in our time, must be prepared for the role of Don Quixote."

The latest conservative, with "new" his paradoxical label, has dressed himself in the armor of a resurrected Edmund Burke and has ridden off to tip at the corrupt windmills built of liberalism. But, like Don Quixote he must shore himself up against the laughter of his contemporary. He dreams of the baroque, he writes wistfully of ladies and gentlemen who snuffed their snuff, and some are bound to think him out of joint with his age. It is the noble don's romantic and troubled isolation again, written this time in the script of a whirlwind age which has forgotten too much of the old and tried in an era of change. Ridicule will come, Kirk says. But, he warns in his recent book, *A Program For Conservatives*,

... If the conservative does not have the hardihood to endure such ridicule, the time will come—and that perhaps within a single generation—when it will be not only ridiculous, but quite futile, to talk of "personal freedom," "the rule of law," and "the dignity of the human person."

Why is Mr. Kirk so pessimistic? Phrases like "the mass age," "a time that has supped too long on horrors," (one often hears overtones of Shakespeare in Kirk's prose) "remorseless collectivism," "this day when Whirl seems to be king," show him to be God's angry man, most of the anger kindled by his own times and surroundings. Liberals cannot afford to ignore what he has to say, however zealously he says it. Kirk has his cause, and his allies. Like Quixote who had his Sancho, Kirk has his dozens of Sanchos—the mystery being that many of them styled themselves liberals as shortly as five years ago. Their change seems to be of a higher degree of respectability and legitimacy than those of the ex-Communists and ex-liberals, Chambers and Matthews.

To pursue the mystery: Kirk has succeeded in his established task—or one of them—which is to convert liberals who have become restive under their tag. In so doing, he helps himself, whenever necessary, to the liberal's arsenal and pantheon—making sure that he speaks none too sweetly of the liberal tag itself, and playing down the inconsistencies of his own quick maneuvers.

After decades of unreasoning whoops and cries from "conservatives"—the fraudulent kind who must chip away at every constitutional prerogative that safeguards individual liberty and equality of opportunity so long as they make it clear they oppose Communism—the liberal should welcome his foe from the forest; and a higher order of debate should start. But sadly, after the conservative raid on the liberal arsenal, the issues seem to be few. The New Conservative's fight, reading from Kirk and the historian Peter Viereck down the battle line, seems to be one of words. Like much modern classical music, New Conservatism's fight with liberalism has more sonority than anything else. Kirk himself is able to stage a pitched battle because he is willing to misinterpret liberalism, which by definition may be open to free interpretation but not to servitude as a straw man. Yet it is as a straw man that Kirk can use liberalism—in his own version—as precisely that: a straw man. A reading of his *A Program For Conservatives* yields this picture: For Kirk, the typical liberal is a dogmatic rationalizing, "pragmatist" and "relativist"—both as dirty words—a zealot who has shaped an infallible world-view and challenged all to blur his Utopian vision. "The typical liberal of our time is smugness incarnate," Kirk writes. His liberal still lives in an age where only "scientific" truth is acceptable, and where Auguste Comte and John Dewey are sacred icons uncracked and unscarred. He endorses "remorseless collectivism" and statism, and scoffs at or denounces religion. He is a mechanist who would see an industrialized society roller-skate into cultural doom; and with his wholesale welcome of the industrial revolution in American society, he bears guilt for the break-down of the family hearth and the ruin of natural resources. A devastating picture it is.

And Kirk's liberal has otherwise sinned. But from the outline so far summarized, the image of the straw man emerges, toddling into the dead-center mouth of New Conservatism's cannon. Liberals will be somewhat indignant to behold so shabby a creature—supposedly their alter ego—standing before the cannon. There is little or no suggestion anywhere in Kirk's two major books, or in his growing output of articles, that liberalism has glories. Liberalism is the devil's own, and for it little of the angel's garb appears at hand. Thus there is none of the traditional feeling that liberalism is free, rangy, or eclectic, prepared to roll with the blows of an age, or to change when its treasure—human freedom—lies in danger. There is little

feeling that the overt policies of a liberal outlook may grow in likeness from profound root differences, as from the pragmatism of John Dewey and the Christian fatalism of Reinhold Niebuhr.

"Before the conservatives came out of the wilderness," in Arthur Schlesinger's words, there was a day when the causes of the liberals, so recently pillaged by conservatives, were unknown to the latter. Nowadays, the adjustment is painless, sure, quick, in some ways entirely by the neat shift of two labels, and the hurl of the barb at the poor straw man.

The change is easiest if one goes over from the liberalism of a Niebuhr to the New Conservatism of a Viereck. It is not so easy in other cases. Kirk himself represents the right wing of New Conservatism; his counterpart on the left wing, Viereck, does not look with Kirk's disfavor on the reforms of the past half-century. The liberal who may be open to proselytizing will shudder when, for instance, he finds Kirk speaking of the Federal School Lunch Program as a "vehicle for totalitarianism." Or of Social Security as "bearing all the remarks of remorseless collectivism." Or of McCarthyism as "a movement around which men of good will and stern morality can close ranks."

The particulars out of which Kirk's new ideology grows come clear in a point-by-point analysis of his program. We have had the straw man of Kirk's interpretation of liberalism set up. Now as it stands before the cannon, what does the cannon look like? In his *A Program For Conservatives*, Kirk cuts the weapon down into nine problems, basic big questions, which should, he says, be the keynotes of debate between liberals and New Conservatives.

First: The Problem of the Mind, which is to seek "the unbought grace of life." Kirk says that the ideas of duty, honor, right, and beauty "are treated as so many 'ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated' fashions by men who make our laws and form our tastes." We assume they are the liberals. Under their rule, "the cement of society begins to crumble, upon every level of existence." Even granting that those of whom Kirk speaks as "men of good will" seek "the unbought grace of life"—in the form of duty, honor, right, and beauty—some will argue against Kirk's patented meanings for abstractions. Shakespeare's Falstaff says honor is a "scutcheon," a mere crest shielding nothing. Kirk and Falstaff, could the rotund comic return again, would clash on that point—but it would be Kirk's word against the cynic's word. And would Nietzsche's Superman who is right because he is mighty sit well within Kirk's "right"? It is this clash at the root of every "value" which has made the liberal cautious, and always disdainful to drive his own values across those of others. Values exist; and they are real for the liberal as for the conservative. But before them comes a wary self-criticism.

Pursuing the problem of the Mind, Kirk attacks utilitarianism in education. He thinks the higher imagination is starved therein, "so that Reason, the faculty which distinguishes the human person in this world from the brutes, is reduced in acuity and in depth; this is the worst thing that can be done to a person, worse than political tyranny or physical injury." Kirk knows what a liberal education is, and argues for it with fervor:

... a liberal education is not designed simply to satisfy the tastes of the ready-made gentleman; instead, liberal disciplines offer to everyone able to undertake them the possibility of becoming a gentleman. Far from being an instrument of "class supremacy," a liberal education has long been a far more effective leveller than any program of positive legislation in America . . . A liberal education levels upward, not downward.

Here the liberal will second; but next on Kirk's agenda is a gratuitous attack on state-supported schools. Here he says, and "probably in the greater part of our universities and colleges, the 'educational' process has become inimical to the real human person." As Jacques Barzun has written, the City of God cannot be made of public school 26. But Kirk is not entirely sincere, and seems more to have taken up the cant circulating these days against public education. Some of the fellow discreditors belabor public secular education as "godless" and enemy to "truth" because its planners have felt the impact of Dewey's pragmatism. While that influence may have had its drawbacks, it is doubtful that Dewey or the liberals may be held accountable, as it is doubtful that his ideology has hurt school teaching more than it has helped. No credo is without fault, least of all the credos of Dewey's strongest enemies—the parochial schools, the conservative private school interests.

Kirk opens discourse on *The Problem of the Heart* with a firebrands. "Liberals," he says, "from the days of Bentham and James Mill down to our time, have never much concerned themselves with the Heart." Liberals do have hearts, he is quick and generous to add—but suspect others of not having them. Thus liberals resort for reform to "sweet reasonableness . . . positive legislation and sensible good will." The inconsistency of this is not clear. And Kirk is back at his trick of categorizing liberals. "Down to our time" from Bentham and Mill takes in a lot of territory, but it gives no names.

Another trend at work against the Heart is that we have lost true leisure. "Leisure," Kirk says, "is a state of spirit, not a mere busyness during idle hours . . ." When it does become, under misinterpretation, a "mere busyness during idle hours" the consequence is social boredom. In this world of tedium, the conservative's answer is tradition-directedness. Says Kirk:

The tradition-directed person is not bored, for he finds himself to be a part of an immortal continuity and essence, and so put into this

world for an inscrutable purpose . . . He labors habitually; it does not occur to his mind to be unendingly . . . bored.

The real lietmotif behind David Riesman's picture of the lonely crowd, Kirk thinks, lies in the absence of tradition-directedness. In this universe of loneliness, standards plummet. Ideals are hammered down into close molds of conformity. The mass man becomes "other-directed," worshipping at the jade feet of imitation and cheap identity of purpose. For salvation from this uniformity and social boredom, man must seek tradition and order—for Kirk, Christian tradition and order—lending civility and reflection, yielding warm generousities which will halt his counter-march into collectivism, on one side, and misspending of leisure time on the other. To see what Kirk is talking about, observe the automation and conformity which threaten even the college campus—where students are supposed to be trying to get away from "mass" thinking and doing. The picture offers little relief from the picture offered by the many adults whose abiding topic of conversation are Arthur Godfrey and the "64,000 Question." This is boredom, and the new Don Quixotes, if they want yoeman duty, might crack at the television windmills. The sad part of the problem, Kirk says, is that those who know the face of true leisure—those involved in "the working of mind and spirit"—must pay the piper, and have none. "*Their* work grows steadily more burdensome; *their* leisure steadily diminishes."

Of all trends existing in his self-defined "liberalism," Kirk most fears that toward collectivism. ("There is such a thing as creeping socialism!") Standing at the opposing pole from collectivism is Community; the magnetism of that opposing pole attracts the conservative. Community involves, specifically, the common purposes, sympathies, history which undergird a society. It exists before government; government and the other "artificial" structures grow out of community. Kirk says of the collectivism—community antithesis:

Community is the product of volition. Community stands for variety and intricacy; collectivism, for uniformity and arid simplicity.

However much one may agree, this distinction leaves out many of the twists and turns itself. "Whatever its pretenses to humanitarianism," Kirk says, "in the long run, collectivism turns out to be the gratification of the lust for power." It is not plain from Kirk's explanation that he grants a difference between form and fulfillment—between the hard and passionate theory of Marx, the Fabian and Fourierian ideas in a milder vein, and collectivism as adopted in the modern U. S. S. R., where it has been poured into the bottles of nationalism. In fairness to the pure system, any economic theory may lie on the verge of decay into corrupt power unless safeguards

control it. Reinhold Niebuhr comes closer to the true complexities—and true dangers—when he asserts, in *The Children of Light and The Children of Darkness*, that the “children of light”—“those who believe that self-interest should be brought under the discipline of a higher law”—invoked Marxism. Not Marx the collectivist, but Lenin and Machiavelli, the nationalists, are the children of darkness. And it might be added that community, no less than collectivism, has in its time become an instrument of the will-to-power.

But how approach the danger of collectivism—if it exists? Kirk thinks the witch to be burned is bureaucracy, under whose spreading carpet men lose their joy and pride in work. There is no thrill of creation. Leisure time grows, and goes as easily—squandered. The growing cut-offness of the worker, with the added feeling of cut-offness from society, leads, Kirk believes, to break-down of local institutions, governments, educational structures, and trade customs that make for community. Kirk is an alarmist. But rightly or wrongly so, he is hardly wrong in warning of over-centralization which may be chained with the doom of small units governing man's day-to-day loyalty.

The Problem of Social Justice long has drawn fearsome battle between liberals and conservatives. Kirk takes up the conservative flag with the militance of a Senator Taft, making much of the “ambiguity” of so-called “economic liberalism.” Indeed—in no area of thought has the notion of what is liberal and what is not liberal changed so often, or so radically, as in economics. Hamilton and Jefferson, the prototypes of conservative and liberal thought in early America, provide an over-worked, but apt, contrast. While Hamilton called for a hand-in-hand allegiance between wealth and the federal government, Jefferson attacked both. In the Eastern coast mercantile and trading interests lay a threat to his agrarian society, and a possible scourge for democracy. European Industrialism did not please Jefferson; and while the backlashes of the Industrial Revolution had not waved across the Atlantic there was still time for barriers to be raised against them. His was the economic liberalism of his day; for it allowed for the maximum freedom of man from the perversions of freedom. But it is a far cry from the liberalism of the New and Fair Deals. The change came as circumstances demanded government intervention between the power of big trade and misappropriation of economic justice. Economic bondage is hardly compatible with personal independence: The thread of liberalism has gone unsnapped.

Kirk, criticizing late tendencies explicitly, charges that the economics of John Maynard Keynes, and liberalism since Wilson's New Freedom, have led to “degeneration,” worshipped “an abstract notion of equality,” and ignored the moral element of justice. Has

liberal thought really ignored the moral element? Morally, religiously, there is little in Woodrow Wilson of the wanton "collectivist." His Southern Presbyterian background made him a Calvinist's Calvinist, and an arch moral conservative. Election by the divine hand, a wilful determinism, had made him their agent in the world. For all of Wilson's nobility, there is the overtone of comedy in his intensive moral purpose. Paradoxically, Kirk ascribes the seeds of "degeneracy" to one who in questions of moral attitude belongs to Kirk's own hand.

So with Lord Keynes, by whose economic pattern the New Deal grew. It was Keynes who introduced the principle of government investment to "prime the pump" and who fed the ideology of economic abundance to the decades following the Great Depression. But it was Keynes, the strait-laced English gentleman, who could speak as conservatively as Kirk on questions of morality. Listen to what he says about economic planning:

... Planning should take place in a community in which as many people as possible, both leaders and followers, share your own moral position. Moderate planning will be safe enough if those carrying it out are rightly oriented in their own minds and hearts to the moral issue . . . But the curse is that there is also an important section which could be said to want planning not in order to enjoy its fruits, but because morally they hold ideas exactly the opposite of yours, and wish to serve not God but the devil.

The idea that his thought could lead down the way to collectivism was abhorrent to Lord Keynes. As conservative, he thundered in 1931:

How can I accept the (Communitistic) doctrine, which sets up as its bible, above and beyond criticism, an obsolete textbook? . . . How can I adopt a creed which, preferring the mud to the fish, exalts the boorish proletariat above the bourgeoisie and the intelligensia, who with all their faults, are the quality of life and surely carry the seeds of all human achievement?

Conservatism, if not snobbery! And Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, our gentleman of the liberal school who has debated often with Kirk on podium and in periodical, wrote in the final chapter of his *The Age of Jackson* (1946):

The final rejection of the Jeffersonian case for weak government does not mean that liberalism must herewith commit itself inextricably to the philosophy of government intervention. That would be to create a myth as misleading as Jeffersonian antistatism.

These words, written as they were in 1946, fall upon our ears ten years after with the resonance of true prophecy—even of clairvoyance. Under the impact of Kirk's case for conservatism, liberals may well begin to weigh the earlier words of their prophets with more care. If economic liberalism has "degenerated," if state

planning has overstepped itself, will the liberal be sped back to Jefferson? When freedom comes under threat, probably so; but for the present, a reversal seems uncalled for.

Liberals will not quarrel with Kirk's idea that "It is Ability—the ability of the statesman, the scholar, the economist, the industrialist—which has brought to civilized peoples justice, tranquility, and prosperity." But then Kirk would justify his program for de-centralization, not out of its dangers, but out of his own idea of human purpose: "Man was created, not for equality, but for the struggle upwards from brute nature towards the world that is not terrestrial." Does Kirk mean economic equality—whose pursuit must be acknowledged mutually to be pursuit of a chimera? Or moral, ethical, legal equality—whose pursuit is, or ought to be, highly meaningful in America? And—perhaps a world awaits hereafter "that is not terrestrial;" but it is not for the liberal enough reason to accept a "Justice" making for the static society and "corporate" freedom—which means in the less polite and opposing phrase the freedom of one's own cave. Kirk likes the Middle Ages and their corporatism, and would perhaps turn back the clock. "What really matters," he writes, "is that we should accept the station to which a 'divine tactic' has appointed us with humility and a sense of consecration." While humility and consecration must be, there is still choice. And there is a weak case at best for bowing to confinement on the grounds that a "divine tactic" has confined one. Divine tactics, it will seem to the liberal, are not meant as ether cones.

Kirk discusses the Problem of Wants in essentially the same vein. He attacks both presidents Eisenhower and Truman for blowing the cornucopia too loudly; smoulders at American materialism; slips in his own dig at the Ford Foundation (it "has been conducted on the principles of 'disintegrated liberalism' with none of the sound, if eccentric, common sense of its founder.") In short, Kirk has a short fit of reaction. But he does well to say:

If the public is told incessantly that the only important consideration is the American Standard of living, in time the public will become oblivious to such trifles as justice, mercy, honor, and charity.

The full impact of Kirk's dissent from the reforms of the past fifty years lands joltingly in his treatment of the Problem of Order. He believes "that we have injured our political order by adopting universal suffrage, direct primaries, popular election of senators, and other measures calculated to substitute direct democracy for representative government." Without rejecting these changes, he would apply more order to them. At this point, Kirk begins to sound like Walter Lippmann, who has, in *The Public Philosophy* of last spring, advanced a New Conservatism he refused to classify as any-

thing but a reinvigorated faith in liberal democracy. He notes an erosion in the capacity of the western democracies to govern themselves, a "morbid derangement" of the governing powers in which raw, often untutored public opinion has played on representatives from constituencies, harassed them, stifled their judgment, and thrown things helter-skelter. Like Kirk, Lippmann attributes this to a break-down of order. Urging that "no more than the kings before them should the people be hedged with divinity," he calls for a restoration of "the public philosophy"—a keener recognition of the reciprocal duties binding by natural law governed to governor; governor to governed. The recession of order puts Lippmann and Kirk in the position of Ulysses, who, in this great speech in *Troilus and Cressida*, says:

. . . Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark! What discord follows; each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy . . .
Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong—
Between whose endless jar justice resides—
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.

For the conservative, order acts as a stop for the volume of depravity; for in both Kirk and Lippmann man becomes bestial, incapable of suppressing his will to power, or of siding with the angels. His instincts are at bottom brutal, and "The American conservative," Kirk writes, "needs to remind himself that power is held in check by two forces—the dictates of conscience; and political authority, or the barrier of good laws." With that, the liberal must agree. The liberal Reinhold Niebuhr takes the doctrine of depravity—Christian Original Sin—and makes with it an entirely new critique of liberal democracy, together with a new vindication for it. The liberal may find himself in the median position. He does not trust man's nature enough to think him capable of voluntary order and justice without enforceable law; but he does not distrust it enough to belittle his dignity. Schlesinger has put it well, borrowing from Pascal his brute and angel distinction: "The great tradition of American liberalism regards man as neither brute nor angel."

Mr. Kirk has something to say about the Problem of Loyalty, indeed brings some refreshing thought to the subject. He doesn't relish "the proclivity toward searching the consciences of one's neighbors," but finds it "an old American custom." Senator McCarthy ("about as dangerous as drinking my morning cup of coffee") has raised the question of loyalty to heights, but Kirk believes he has distorted it—although Kirk seems to lack an estimate of the Senator's damage to American prestige and morale. Loyalty, he says, has been argued as quantity when it should have been argued as quality; we have judged a rare urn by its capacity rather than its metal and

figurations. "The question before thinking men," writes Kirk, "is not whether loyalty ought to be expected of citizens, but rather of how loyalty may be defined." For the conservative, loyalty, like order, must be hewn from particularities—"it is not abstraction or ideology." Loyalty must have local grounds for man—in his region, family, friends, customs, and work. Now, however, "the expectation of change has come to exceed the expectation of continuity in almost the whole of America . . ." Partially, perhaps. But so sweeping a judgment ignores the respect for tradition still deeply carved on the American personality—in the South, for instance, where the present state of the segregation problem undercuts Kirk's argument. That crisis shows, at one and the same time, that tradition is more venerable than Kirk thinks, at least here; and that even when tradition becomes hollow it is clasped to a sectional bosom more fervently. Kirk's program would reaffirm the truth of tradition; "humanize" urban life; defend "classes and regions in which tradition is still a *living* force;" and return to the church and family "voluntary association of their old responsibilities as transmitters of tradition."

II

A transitional period in American society, and a transitional thought-stream following it, give Kirk and his colleagues a seed bed. Stability, order, tradition, "security" are in demand. Religious thought shows signs of return to classical attitudes which would sensibly readmit many traditional forms supposedly lost forever due to the sciences and their imitators the social sciences. Political thought grows republican, with the "small r"—and the complete reduction of human personality and behavior to statistics tables now seems less possible than it once did. Thus the New Conservatism rides trends which twenty years ago did not have today's force of march.

The New Conservative, it seems, will do well to stop carping against the reforms made since 1900. Social, economic reforms, as such, have passed from debate; and if they have with their benefits generated evil too—eg: mass culture or statism—the conservative might try with the liberal to cut away the dross, rather than to discard the whole.

The label of plutocracy is a good one to avoid. English conservatism—Kirk's political Adam's rib—has historically resented the incursion of King Pound. Can American conservatism divorce itself from King Dollar? Right now, as Arthur Schlesinger suggests, "most New Conservatives are more at ease with their liberal adver-

saries and critics than they would be in an atmosphere where Locke is the name of a South African golf player and Burke the winner of the U. S. Open in 1931." New Conservatism has, then, the problem of severing itself from the American right wing. Peter Viereck has a better solution than Kirk. "In America," he says, "the Conservative today can best start by being unpolitical." If the only alternative to being "unpolitical" is wholesale worship of the shibboleths of the late Senator Taft, he is right. But he has himself abandoned his own rule, to comment on McCarthyism—the attack on civil liberties and untrammelled expression—as a resurgence of mob Jacobinism, arising from disrespect of tradition. This disrespect of tradition, far from conservatism, is a "pseudo-conservatism"—in Richard Hofstadter's tag—growing in the "rootlessness and erogeneity of American life, and above all, (in) its peculiar scramble for status and its peculiar search for secure identity." Where people find themselves either losing or gaining ground in the mobility of our social scale, pseudo-conservatism thrives. It thrives where the first generation immigrant is jealous and covetous of the "arrived." It thrives, too, where the arrived, maybe slipping, ladies of some D. A. R. chapters fear and want to push under their high heels the immigrants and rising enterprisers who push them from below.

For Viereck, New Conservatism, or "the liberal-conservative synthesis," is moral and cultural. It will fight the radical attack from both wings seeking to denigrate tradition or to unseat or suppress others for selfish reasons. This synthesis is a sort of "legitimism"—"the unspoken community sense of what is lawful."

Thus defined, the legitimism of the 1950's is the parliamentary, constitutional method of change plus a general community feeling . . . that humane reforms take precedence over laissez-faire.

. . . The ideal liberal-conservatism of the future . . . would avoid two things and would serve two things. It would avoid the direct democracy of the New Deal liberals (with their disrespect for "outdated" constitutional procedures) and also avoid the social inhumaneness of the Old Guard Republicans. It would serve the old legitimism of constitutional guaranties and also the new legitimism of social democracy. . . .

Perhaps Peter Viereck, rather than Kirk, has put the case best for the New Conservative Don Quixotes as they mount for their ride against the windmills. He has a synthesis, and perhaps that has been sought all along.

In Review

Peter Quennell, *Hogarth's Progress*.
New York: Viking, 1955.

The fascination of Hogarth's works is certainly the selling feature of Peter Quennell's study of the 18th century English artist. In his unassuming preface, Mr. Quennell becomingly nods at Austin Dobson's Hogarth biography of the late 19th century and then defines his own work as "a portrait of the artist." While he does not wish to assume the role of art historian, he indicates that one of his primary concerns is the relation between Hogarth's works and times. In this respect, I have no argument with Quennell's method, for his penetrating analyses of the "consequential little man's" paintings and engravings are indeed illuminating and enjoyable, revealing both the complexities and subtleties of Hogarth's art and the sensitive modern's approach to them.

But it is a mistake to read *Hogarth's Progress* primarily as a biography. "Portrait of the artist" clearly tags the pattern of the book. Quennell is not the dispassionate historian organizing and reviewing minute facts; he is the interested creator carefully selecting materials for his portrait. Detailed biographical facts are omitted or mentioned only for their intrinsic interest; important aspects of the artist's life (his friendships, for example, with Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Jonathan Richardson, Johnson, the Hoadleys, and Garrick) are slighted in favor of less significant events (the most prominent being the over-drawn political war of Wilkes-Churchill versus Hogarth). Nevertheless, though such details go unrecognized or are obscured, the broad features of the artist emerge.

Unlike other artistic and literary men of the 18th century who criticized pointedly or recorded faithfully their own times—the incisive Pope, the polished Walpole, the lively Boswell, and the courtly Gainsborough—

Hogarth can be pinned down within his art form to no particular mode of expression. Moral engraved series, portraits, historical paintings, satiric conversation pieces, and curious aesthetic analyses were within his realm. Yet, the artist's background—he was the son of a poor schoolmaster who lived in the neighborhood of Bartholomew Fair—hardly suggests that he could have produced such variety or that his viewpoint could have been so strikingly original. Because of the general paucity of biographical fact for the first thirty years of Hogarth's life, Quennell chooses to lay the groundwork for the developing portrait through a representation of what the acute observer of Hogarth's day would see around him in London—for Hogarth, as Marjorie Bowen emphasizes in her study of the artist, was indeed a cockney. Curiously enough, once Quennell has started drawing the portrait by indirection, he continues this method throughout his book so that the final product is a picture of Hogarth as revealed by his times and works. Though this technique has its marked limitations—besides the danger of drawing biographical fact from artistic productions (and Hogarth's personal conduct could fare very poorly from such an approach)—an effective view of Hogarth and a lively and accurate picture of Georgian London are revealed. Hogarth emerges from the panorama as its interpreter, its objective "Spectator." Excepting for his attacks on Italianate taste and his fights with Wilkes and Churchill, he was a curiously quiet man who revealed the admirable qualities of the thinking, upper middle class while discarding the awkward pretensions of his society.

Hogarth's life was a markedly undramatic one: Quennell was thus faced with serious problems. He overcomes part of his difficulty by employing the

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artist's productions dramatically so that the third series of paintings which were engraved for general sale, *Marriage a la Mode*, provides the central "incident" in the book. It is the climax of both Hogarth's career and *Hogarth's Progress*. The artist had proved himself—all past commentators assure us—as an outstanding didactic illustrator in his first two series, *The Harlot's Progress* and *The Rake's Progress*. Quennell urges a slightly altered point of view: the popularity of the prints stemmed as much from the enjoyment people had trying to identify characters as from the moral lessons the illustrations were ostensibly to reveal. I might further suggest that the ingenuity of the prints—their relatively clear narratives, their minute details, and their wonderfully contrived situations (albeit their basic reality)—attracted the interest of purchasers and the less fortunate audiences who had to crowd before printshop windows to see the sad fortunes of Moll Hackabout and Tom Rakewell. But the social criticism of the two *Progresses* is relatively heavy. *Marriage a la Mode* places Hogarth among the most subtle of 18th century satirists; the narrative in the series of six paintings is paced swiftly and tragically as the arranged marriage of "two characters so ill-equipped and ill-matched" is brought to its morally logical end.

In spite of the obvious pleasure he takes in talking about these three important series, Quennell does not slight Hogarth's other works. His backgrounds and discussions of the lesser-known prints, the portraits, and the few works in the "grand style" are handled with perception. His discussion, however, of *The Analysis of Beauty*, though it impresses upon the reader the difficulties of Hogarth's prose treatise which advances the theories of the "line of beauty" and the "line of grace," is handled with less facility. In this case, however, Quennell might legitimately urge that he is not concerned with art-historian interests.

Because of the emphasis placed on the paintings and engravings, Quennell should have given some attention to Hogarth's handling of the two techniques and his adaption of materials to them. Furthermore, Quennell's emphasis on the artist's productions as the basic vehicle for portraying Hogarth cries for more and better reproductions than appear in the book. Since American galleries own almost no Hogarth oils, the inclusion of more examples of Hogarth's work would have been a courtesy and valuable service to American readers.

For the reader interested in a concise presentation of Hogarth's biography, I urge him to read Austin Dobson's relatively old and brief study. For the reader interested in Hogarth's milieu as revealed in his prints, I suggest H. W. Wheatley's *Hogarth's London* and Marjorie Bowen's *William Hogarth, the Cockney's Mirror*. Finally, for the reader who wants a lively, fresh—though not markedly original—study of Hogarth revealed against the background of the times which produced him and which he scrutinized and portrayed with brilliant detail, I recommend Peter Quennell's *Hogarth's Progress*.

—Donald H. Kuhn

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*.
New York: Viking, 1956.

The occasion for these comments on Graham Greene is provided by the reading of *The Quiet American*, but the comments themselves are fashioned out of some accomplishment in the reading of Greene's work in general, and out of considerable sympathy for his artistic purpose. Nevertheless, I find it necessary to point out the flawed art of *The Quiet American*, and to relate this flaw with its parallels in certain others of Greene's novels.

American criticism has centered its complaint about this book around "the quiet American" himself, Pyle, because

of the unpleasant lines with which he was drawn in the book. I should imagine that no one who found himself identifiable with this American would be flattered by the picture; Pyle is always naive, at times almost viciously so, and regularly a blunderer. His discourses on political theory for the Far East during the Saigon crisis are shown to bad advantage in the exchange with the experienced practicality of the English journalist Alden. His headlong and adolescent misconception of Alden's mistress, Phuong, sometimes denies him the sympathy of the reader. But most important, his active interferences in the problems of the rebellion, even though they are hinted to be directed officially, almost shells him completely of maturity. These heroic disqualifications of character are easily generalized into first Alden's, then Greene's view of American intelligence, and yet it is not, it seems to me, because he is an American that Greene made him the basic instrument of the plot, but because he is so much unlike any of Greene's other characters, in any book.

There cannot be much doubt that Graham Greene is the English executor of the artistic purpose of Francois Mauriac. In all of the novels which Greene had written until *The Quiet American*, the predominant characteristic had been the extra dimension which was afforded by his concern for certain problems of Roman Catholicism. For Mauriac, these problems are most clearly limited to the middle-class Catholic with social intelligence, and the central figures of his works have almost always been women, not socially but religiously ambitious. Mauriac's complaint seems to be that there are too many opportunities in the religion and its lay auxiliaries for stupid Catholics; his conclusions are reached in the psychology of repentance. I know this is very general; *La Pbarisienne* seems, for example, to contain quite explicitly what I have said.

But Graham Greene's inheritance of Mauriac's theme shows a real change

from the source. Scobie's problem in *The Heart of The Matter* is one, not of the psychology of repentance, but of the psychological adaptability of an individual (convert) to the Church. Scobie half-understands, and over-acts; he is troubled by the theology of repentance and forgiveness, but he functions and decides, supposedly, on the basis of uninformed piety. His final despair has seemed to me spurious because of this fact: his intellect and will do not cooperate, and yet he fails by the Intellectual Sin.

The End of the Affair provides a clearer picture of the world of Greene's novels. Not a character appears who is not capable of advanced intellection, not even peddlers. The solution of the plot involves, in the change of heart in Sarah, a kind of *deus ex machina*. This is an almost understandable motive for Bendrix' prayer: "O God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough. I'm too tired and old to learn to love. Leave me alone forever." *The End of the Affair* is fascinating but it is unreal. Just as *The Heart of The Matter* is a study, but a wrong one, in theological psychology, *The End of The Affair* is a theological melodrama.

In *The Quiet American* one new thing is discovered. This is a Greene novel that is without religious dimension. But the people are the same. Pyle happens to be the Catholic, but his religion does not seem to have played much part in the fashioning of his character. There is very little difference however, between the character of Alden and that of Bendrix in *The End of the Affair*. More important about this new book is the fact that Pyle should be naive, sometimes vicious, and a blunderer; for if I am not mistaken, this is a character portrayal that is new to Graham Greene. Pyle's lack of intelligence is his distinguishing feature, and it is a complex of his unintelligent actions which furthers the plot. That he is an American may explain (for Greene) the positivist approach he takes

to the settlement of the political turmoil, but it seems reasonable to decide that a defensive American reader is required to assume that the blame for his stupidity in general must also, in Greene's mind, be placed on his nationality.

It is true that religion does not play an active role in this novel, and, awkward to say, this constitutes, in a Greene novel, the artistic flaw. All the other novels, *Brighton Rock*, and the two I have mentioned before, have had the advantageous religious dimension, but have not displayed an ability to orient character to it. They have lacked reasonable sinners, and those who were designed for such roles were designed inaccurately: Scobie, who commits unlikely despair, Sarah, first converted by her interpretation of luck as a miracle, shoots toward sanctity, and Bendrix, who rejects God and His love because he is revolted by the miraculous change. In *The Quiet American*, the flaw is the same kind but reversed. Greene has shaken the props of theological plots, and devised a character for the first time who is capable of sin, but his sins are understandable in the novel only as political ones or, for some, as American evils.

It is difficult to believe that Graham Greene places the burden of this book on either political sins or national evils. This is true partly because of his other work, partly because the strength of the book seems to exceed the potential such a burden would offer, and mostly because of the fact that Alden, who is the real protagonist, seems to be in search of a moral explanation for Pyle, and his own natural aversion to him. There is a hole in the novel where the religion, which is so much a part of Greene's artistic inheritance and experience, has been left out in an attempt, perhaps, to untangle the needs of his plots. But for Graham Greene, this constitutes an artistic flaw, if it would for few others. That this lack of religious dimension is a flaw in the book is the only explanation available for its

confusing impression on the reader, and perhaps for the vascillating critical opinion of it which has appeared.

I view the artistic purpose of Graham Greene to be an attempt to portray by virtue of suffering and loss the greatness of religious values. Together with this he seems to be concerned with the worse religious deficiencies of members of the Catholic Church, and has found most often that this was easiest to show in terms not of the members, but the Church itself. *The Quiet American* deals with a man who was not a member of the Church, but who, for the purposes of the novel, should have been. All in all, Graham Greene, who quotes Leon Bloy, seems closer to filling the characterization made by that strange and religious man than Thomas Merton, who named his book *The Tears of The Blind Lions*. The description is: "When those who love God try to talk about Him, their words are blind lions looking for springs in the desert." This, it seems, is Graham Greene, artist.

—John Mahoney

The Fallen Angel and Other Stories
—William T. Polk—University of
North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill,
N. C.

The nineteen short stories in this posthumously published volume by William T. Polk are unified in one of two ways: the stories are either related by a person similar to the author in his youth or they are unified by the locale of the stories, a small town in the Piedmont of North Carolina. There is no thread running through the stories to unify them into a single entity nor is there a consistent point of view which the author assumes in the telling of his stories. The mildly sardonic commentary that is found in a majority of the stories—either in an explicit statement, or implicitly in the pattern of the action—is the sole element which might be considered a unifying force. Many of the familiar "type" characters of



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the corn-pone and chitterling variety of southern fiction are found in these stories and they are for the most part one-dimensional. There are other "types" also which are not strictly southern. Those in the former category are the "Bad" supply man, the crooked landholder, the ignorant sharecropper, the jack-leg preachers, and the Negroes who look on lawyers as gods. Those in the latter category are the Madam with the heart of gold, the bachelor-recluse who reads the classics, and the displaced mystic. Mr. Polk manages to give a slight variation on these types through his observant eye for the right detail, the correct southernism and his selection of dialect, and the consistency in his picturization of the background: a small, sleepy southern town. His ear for the natural rhythms of folk speech and his ability to create an exactly appropriate metaphor are the distinguishing characteristics of his short stories. In describing an ignorant farmer and his wife in "Croix de Cuisine" Mr. Polk writes, "They had only each other and a couple of pigs. That was enough. They were unreasonably happy." In the same story he describes a spring as being "silently busy" and in another of the stories he describes tobacco kilns as "agricultural altars to Nicotine."

Mr. Polk's "plotted" stories are weakened by his tendency to overwork the pat or surprise ending. This weakness is very obvious in the group of stories which are concerned with making some sort of commentary on the social scene. In "The Crop" an ignorant sharecropper is cheated first by a Supply Man, then by a greedy planter. He is jailed for burning a tobacco barn, and when he is released, he finds that his daughter has become a prostitute. He is finally put to death by the state for murder and the author concludes the story with "the state had gathered its crop." The author in so heavily stacking the cards against his characters and in labeling the supply man and the landholder as "bad" men

allows the story to become bathos rather than tragedy.

In "Coralee's Burden Bearer" the town lawyer, a reformed drunk, agrees to be defense counsel for a Negro woman who has shot her husband. She claims self-defense after the lawyer has suggested the possibility to her, but a vital piece of evidence to support her story is missing. At the last minute a jack-leg Negro preacher turns up with the evidence that the woman shot her husband in self defense. While being highly suspicious, this last minute turn of events is enough to raise some doubt in the minds of the jury so that Coralee is acquitted. "Soon afterwards she married Uncle Ned and went by Lawyer Battle's office to pay him his 'entertainer' fee. But by that time Lawyer Battle was back in the alcoholic ward of the state hospital." There is little doubt in the reader's mind that Coralee shot her husband because she "cotched him with a yaller gal out in the broom-straw field back of the house," but if the story is meant to be a satire on the travesty of justice, the point of view is not sufficiently unified to afford the satire any punch.

Mr. Polk's most obvious weaknesses as an artist are displayed in "The Night the Races Were Supposed to Riot." In the foreground of the story there is a great deal of broad, farcical action, but in the background looms the explosive thundercloud of a lynch. A small boy's sense of excitement and fear is well displayed, but the broader action concerning the boy who was sent to protect the family and who promptly goes to sleep, coupled with the old maid aunt who lives most of the time in 1865 instead of 1925 and who reads Plutarch's Lives in the hall before the barricaded door, plus all sorts of ridiculous action weakens the comedy inherent in the action while it minimizes the possibility of making an effective statement about the background action.

Mr. Polk is on solid ground when he writes the episodic story of comic action which occurs in his small southern town

of Hastings. The title story and "My Mother's Uncle Hal" deal with the quixotic adventures of an almost mythical character in southern literature: the blustering, hard-drinking, slightly mad town character whom everybody loves because, and not in spite of, his weaknesses. The pictures of Uncle Hal fighting a bulldog in the middle of a dusty road on the dog's own terms (on all-fours and without a weapon) and of the converted drunk who has become a jack-leg preacher praying over the dying Uncle Hal and recounting his ludicrous sins to his Maker are highlights of the volume. The description of the series of Tableaux given by a group of ladies in a decaying southern mansion for the benefit of the W.C.T.U. is another high point in the title story. A list of the titles of the tableaux suggests the humor inherent in a description of them: "Chisel In Hand Stood the Sculptor Boy," "Love or Lucre," "Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine," "Cinderella and the Glass Slipper," and the highlight of the evening, "The Drunkard's Damnation." These events are told with the straight face which characterizes the teller of tall tales. Mr. Polk manages to cut beneath the farce and paint a picture of a real person in Uncle Hal. Mr. Polk never quite equals the mood set by these two stories although he almost achieves it in "A Dark House and Bloody Fight", which recounts the story of a Saturday night "do" which turns into a brawl.

In "According to the Law and Evidence" we see the acquittal of a young woman who has obviously murdered her husband but who was acquitted because she effectively crossed her legs several times before the jury. Here again any comment on a travesty of justice is weakened by the pat ending.

The two historical stories in the volume have a very tenuous relationship to the rest of the stories. In "Golden Eagle Ordinary" we have a rather sentimental portrait of Aaron

Burr on his way to Richmond to be executed, and in "Home From the Sea", an equally sentimental portrait of an incident near the end of Sir Walter Raleigh's life.

The author used the technique of allegory in "Bonus Ben Carries On" in his attempt to satirize the seamy politician. But the allegorical symbols are too explicit and actually mean very little. His moral that there will always be crooked politicians in the world needs a more forceful method of presentation than the one the author chose.

"The Patriot" is another case in which potential tragedy falls into bathos. A bachelor-recluse who reads the classics hides a Negro from a lynch mob. He is visited on the same day by his childhood sweetheart who went north and married a Yankee. She tells him that he is the father of her son. On the same night both he and his son are killed by the mob who are hunting the Negro. The story is a combination of so many elements that it cannot say anything important about any one of them.

Though these and other weakness are apparent throughout the collection, Mr. Polk's basic sympathy and love for his South save the volume from being just another collection of southern short stories. While he is working in the same tradition which shapes the work of another southern author, Eudora Welty, his stories contain neither the insight nor the witty satire which characterize Miss Welty's work, but his ear for the language of his region and his affection for his characters in the humorous stories raise this collection above the ordinary.

After one closes the volume, the trivialities and weaknesses of any particular story fall away. The picture that remains is of Uncle Hal, who was "a big, bald-headed, black-bearded man following a pack of hounds after a fox over the brimstone bogs with sparks flying off his tail like a comet." Uncle

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Hal, larger than life, is a genuine comic creation. We could have hardly asked more of Mr. Polk.

—John B. Easley

John Mahoney, *Parousia*. Detroit: Harlo, 1955.

John Mahoney is presently finishing a Ph. D. at the University of North Carolina in the comparative literature of the Middle Ages, a study which is intimately related with his poems. *Parousia*, the title poem, "has reference in the Greek word, parousia, to the use of the word in the premillennium Middle Ages for the Second Coming." Although there are other themes, the religious tone is predominant, with emphasis on and wonder at the theme, "All Flesh is Grass." Many of the thirteen poems in this slim volume are cast in traditional patterns: sonnet, aubade, chanson, matins, responsory, and ubi sunt, which compel the reader to project the poems into traditional moulds with their own rationale. Some of these patterns are successful, but others give the writer difficulty, more specifically the lyric mood in such poems as Chanson:

*But oh,
the gravels of
the past, washed up to shore
in patterns by the endless sea
remain.*

Such works often seem out of his affective range, at present. He is at his best in such works as *Ubi Sunt*:

*I love you, one, with efforts' reason-
ing labor,
Knowing the while that you, like
effort, are dying,
Weighing the virtue, early and
stolen, there lying
Burst on the world in the hurry
of catching a savior.*

in which he can work out a theme within the conventional form.

Among the complex intricacies of the poems with their patterns of traditional and symbolic metaphor, it is possible to hear recurring notes of three recent religious poets. T. S. Eliot is there in substance in his 'rats on glass' images in such passages as:

*While children flirt with red
Old coals, and mothers stitch
Their children's mouths with thread
Of ignorance, and bury them in
some old niche
Below some broken bottles, I ponder: . . .*

And in spirit throughout, but the spirit of 'Ash Wednesday' and after, not the 'Wasteland.' Hopkins, too, is heard in such lines as:

*To serenade the poor beggars
Who sleepwalk and sleeping
On the streets' cascade below.*

and his sense of God's eminence in human affairs in such lines as:

*And if still for your love, one, so
sightlessly
Gods bells be ringing,
Then failing and dying, oh forth
from the womb
go singing!*

Thompson's contrived poesis also pops up, but I believe this to be the weakest feature of Mr. Mahoney's poetry, especially in some of the "pretty" imagery in the lyric poems.

Basic to these religious poems is the rhetorical structure, a soul arguing with God, trying to wrest a meaning from His precious store of mysteries:

*A day's a vicious thing and thus
is known,
And on its heels come quick the
stilling shade
And night's but shadow's sound.
But in this relic of an Adam's
bone
Must I allow a relic's fault per-
vade?
But ah! it is quite
The hour yet; in day's the size of
night.*

Rather than the metaphor and imagery giving form to the thought, the rhetorical pattern gives meaning and pregnancy to the imaginative structure. Within the soul's interior monologue, in the best poems, a pattern of imagery illuminates what has gone before and is affectively related to what follows. In other poems, such as the excellent 'Novitiate to Learning,' the dramatic narrator boldly states his proposition and forces the reader to sympathize and acquiesce, possibly against his will. The tonal values are low, subordinated to carefully worked-out thought patterns. The religious fervor, however, is Hopkinsian without the frantic, almost bitter passion, and Thompsonian less the excessive prettiness and structural contrivance. Mr. Mahoney's command of metrics and rhyme might well be envied by many other young poets. His skill is an unobtrusive prop to his overall structure, although an unjustified dissonance might appear occasionally without warning.

Some of the early poems are marred by an inadequate fusion of thought and form. The logic becomes mere logic and might descend to bald statement, such as:

*And cast the rotten with cursing
ire
Into a furnace of unquenchable
fire?*

In such poems as 'Parousia I' and 'Bewilderment', the thought has been overlaid with imagery and not integrated into a metaphor. He tends at times to be diffuse in imagery, although not in structure, because the images illuminate the structure and not each other. The imagery and metaphor are too intellectualized, caught in too tight a rhetorical pattern, and do not soar. But it is unkind to dwell too long on a young poet's defects, especially because Mr. Mahoney's poetry indicates an unusual talent which has learned much from models, but has also digested and reformed images in its own pattern. A poem rarely slips from the poet's grasp.

He can always say what he wishes to say with an ease that is remarkable for a beginner. His best poems, especially 'Novitiate to Learning', 'Baccalaureate', 'Ubi Sunt', and 'Responsory', speak with a point for point analogy between imagery, metaphor, and thought. The later poems, with their remarkable ease and dense but effective texture, indicate a continued development. We might well look forward to more from Mr. Mahoney, if he can give us such lines as:

*This wheel, this carousel, is spinning,
Around the face of a question clock
My will's wild eyes are speeding.
This hope, this fairy vision,
Doubt's refractor, sorrow's ancient prism,
From its buried nest in gelatine
of memory tears, is floating down
The falls.*

—G. A. Santangelo



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